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ANTI-ARMOR DEFENSE DATA STUDY
(A2D2)
PHASE II

FINAL REPORT
VOLUME IV -- US ANTI-TANK DEFENSE AT
KRINKELT-ROCHERATH, BELGIUM (DECEMBER, 1944)

15 FEBRUARY 1991



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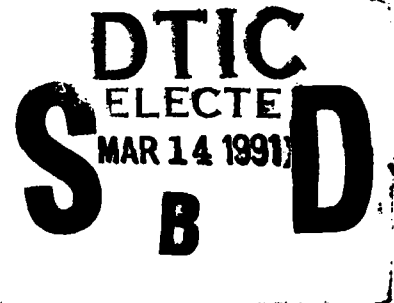
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INTRODUCTION

The information gathered and compiled in this Volume was part of an effort performed for the US Army Concepts Analysis Agency under Contract DAAL01-90-C-0071, Delivery Order Number 3. The objective of the effort was to collect detailed historical data on at least fourteen combat actions where US forces were defending against enemy armor attacks. The data set will be used in a joint US/UK analysis of the degradation in anti-armor defense effectiveness under combat conditions. The resulting degradation factors will allow projections of the combat performance of future anti-armor defenses to be based upon a balanced combination of historical and instrumented field test data.

A complete description of the work performed by SAIC is found in Volume I, Technical Report, dated 30 March 1990. Volumes II and III, respectively, describe the anti-tank combat actions that took place at Mortain, France in August, 1944 and Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium in December 1944. This Volume describes the result of the detailed data collection on the engagement at Krinkelt-Rocherath, Belgium, in December, 1944. Also included in this Volume is an appendix detailing the performance of U.S. anti-tank weapons against German tanks and an appendix of actions completed by SAIC sorted by date, location, and type of weapon used.

Copies of the actual WWII maps (1:25,000) and overlays of Krinkelt-Rocherath were delivered to the US Army Concepts Analysis Agency as part of this project. Maps within this Volume were created from the original maps.

CHAPTER 1

THE ARDENNES: THE BATTLE FOR THE NORTHERN SHOULDER

BACKGROUND

Following the Allied breakout at St. Lo in July 1944, the near encirclement of the German forces near Falaise wrecked the German Army in the West.¹ Even though the Allies never completely closed the pocket and many units escaped, the Germans left most of their equipment and thousands of casualties behind.² Allied armies chased the shattered remnants towards the German border, but their logistics could not sustain this sudden, swift advance. By fall, supply difficulties and stiffening German resistance, from units which the Germans had managed to rebuild with prodigious effort, combined to slow the Allied advance. As the Allies ran into the defenses along the German border, they became locked into a grinding battle of attrition in terrain where even second-rate German units could defend effectively. By mid-December 1944, American units were moving forward slowly. The main objective of General Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group was the capture of the Roer River dams which, if opened, could flood the river and prevent its crossing. Since the Roer blocked the approach to the Rhine, it had to be crossed before Germany could be invaded and defeated.

THE GERMAN PLAN

Even as Allied units raced toward Germany in September, Hitler was already planning a counteroffensive. On 16 September, gesturing at a map, he announced to his astonished generals that he would attack, "...here, out of the Ardennes, with the objective -- Antwerp."³ Hitler was determined to make an attack in the West. The vastness of the Eastern front and the fact that the Soviets had over 500 division-sized units meant that there was little likelihood for a decisive

¹The overview for the Ardennes offensive, described in the following fifteen pages, is drawn mainly from Hugh M. Cole, The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge (Wash. D.C.: OCMH, 1965).

²According to Martin Blumenson, Breakout and Pursuit, (Washington, DC: OCMH, 1961), pg. 555 and Map 11, only 20,000-40,000 Germans escaped, of 19 Divisions in the pocket on August 6.

³Cole, Ardennes, pg.2.

victory there. But in the West, a hard blow against the forces of what Hitler always considered decadent democracies seemed to offer some chance of success. During the months of planning that followed, Hitler's generals tried to persuade him to adopt a less ambitious plan. An offensive to Antwerp, in their view, exceeded the combat power and logistics reach of the forces they were able to rebuild during the fall of 1944. But in the end, the plan was very much the one that Hitler dictated.

With elaborate secrecy, the Germans assembled forces for their offensive. For the assault, the Germans were able to gather thirteen infantry and seven armored divisions. Another five divisions were in reserve. The assault units had over a thousand tanks or armored assault guns and some 1,900 supporting artillery pieces. The German plan, *shown in Figure 1*, was to attack west to the Meuse River and cross that obstacle in the vicinity of Liege. Then, the Germans would swing north and capture Antwerp, separating the British from the Americans and, Hitler hoped, create another Dunkirk. The main attack would be carried out by Sixth Panzer Army with Fifth Panzer Army attacking to cover the southern flank. On both sides of the penetration, infantry divisions would attack to secure the shoulders and defend against allied counterattacks.

Figure 1 also shows the actual German penetration compared to the German plan. Clearly, the main attack made almost no progress. After the failure of the main attack to break through, the Germans tried to shift their main effort to the south. But they lacked sufficient fuel for this more lengthy advance and, more importantly, had lost the time they needed to overcome a surprised but swiftly reacting American army. Clearly, the American defenders who held the northern shoulder were instrumental in defeating the German Army's last major offensive during World War II.

SIXTH PANZER ARMY PLAN

Responsibility for conducting the main attack of the German offensive belonged to Sixth Panzer Army. Commanded by SS-General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, a former butcher by trade and a fanatical Nazi, the Sixth Panzer Army was the

strongest of the three armies participating in the offensive. It included nine divisions in three corps: LXVII Armeekorps (AK), 326th and 246th Volksgrenadier Divisions (VGD); I SS-Panzerkorps (PzK), 1st and 12th SS-Panzer Divisions, 12th and 277th VGD, and 3rd Parachute Division; and II SS-PzK with 2d and 9th SS-Panzer Divisions. For its main effort, Sixth Army planned that I SS-PzK would break through along Rollbahns (Routes) C and D. North of the main attack, at Monschau, LXVII AK's mission was to break through American lines and block any thrust from the north (its bloody failure is not described in this narrative). To exploit I SS-PzK's breakthrough, Dietrich held II SS-PzK in reserve.

To conduct its main attack, Sixth Panzer Army planned to use I SS-PzK's infantry to break through the defending Americans and open the way for its armored divisions to exploit towards the West. In the north, 277th Volksgrenadier Division (VGD) was to seize the twin village Rocherath-Krinkelt to give 12th SS-PzD access to Route C. To the south, the 3rd Parachute and 12th Volksgrenadier Divisions were to open Route D for 1st SS-PzD. Seizing these roads was critical to German success. The hilly, forested terrain in the Ardennes made cross country movement, particularly in the winter, difficult or impossible. The German attack depended on quickly opening the roads to have any chance of success. Sixth Army's timetable allowed one day to break through, another to clear the Hohes Venn high ground, reaching the Meuse on the third day, and crossing on the fourth.

AMERICAN POSITIONS

Standing in the way of the German attack was the American 99th Infantry Division, a new unit being seasoned in what was considered to be a quiet sector of the front. Inserted in the 99th's sector, the veteran 2nd Infantry Division was attacking toward the Roer dams. The 99th was stretched over a broad front with no reserves. From north to south, its 395th, 393rd, and 394th regiments defended the front. Because it was astride all three routes needed by 12th SS-Panzer Division, the 394th would be hardest hit.

The 99th "Checkerboard" Division was a green unit, having been in Europe only since 3 November. Being a new unit, the 99th had not had time to accumulate the extra weapons, vehicles, and equipment commonly found in other units that had been in action for a while. In addition, its attached tank destroyer battalion had towed guns, and their lack of mobility was an especially severe problem in the Ardennes. The Division was occupying a quiet sector of the northern Ardennes to gain some experience before being committed to offensive operations. The 99th Division's front stretched 19 miles, from Buchholz Station in the south to Monschau in the north.

In contrast to the 99th, the 2d Infantry Division was a very seasoned unit. After the St. Lo breakout in late July, the 2d Division advanced into Brittany with the VIII Corps. The division came to the Ardennes in the autumn of 1944 to rest and absorb replacements. Following this respite, V Corps gave it the mission of capturing the Roer River dams. The 2d Division launched this attack on 13 December, meeting stiff resistance. By the beginning of the German offensive three days later, the 2d Division had already suffered 1,200 casualties.

Despite its losses, the 2d was still a formidable force, having collected many extra automatic weapons and vehicles in earlier actions, as well as having three self-propelled TD battalions attached to it rather than one, the normal practice in the theater. One of its chief assets was the experienced 741st Tank Battalion, which on 16 December had 47 Sherman tanks. The division was also fortunate in having as its commander General Walter M. Robertson, a bold and skillful commander who was largely responsible for the success of the American defense around the Elsenborn Ridge. The presence of this seasoned unit in the Rocherath area came as a complete surprise to the Germans.

In reserve in Belgium, the 1st Infantry Division joined V Corps at 2400 on 16 December to help plug the holes the Germans had torn in the US lines. The 1st was arguably the most veteran unit in the US Army, having seen battle in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. After fighting across France in July and August 1944, the division suffered heavy casualties in the battle to take Aachen during September and October, and in the bloody fighting in the Hürtgen Forest in

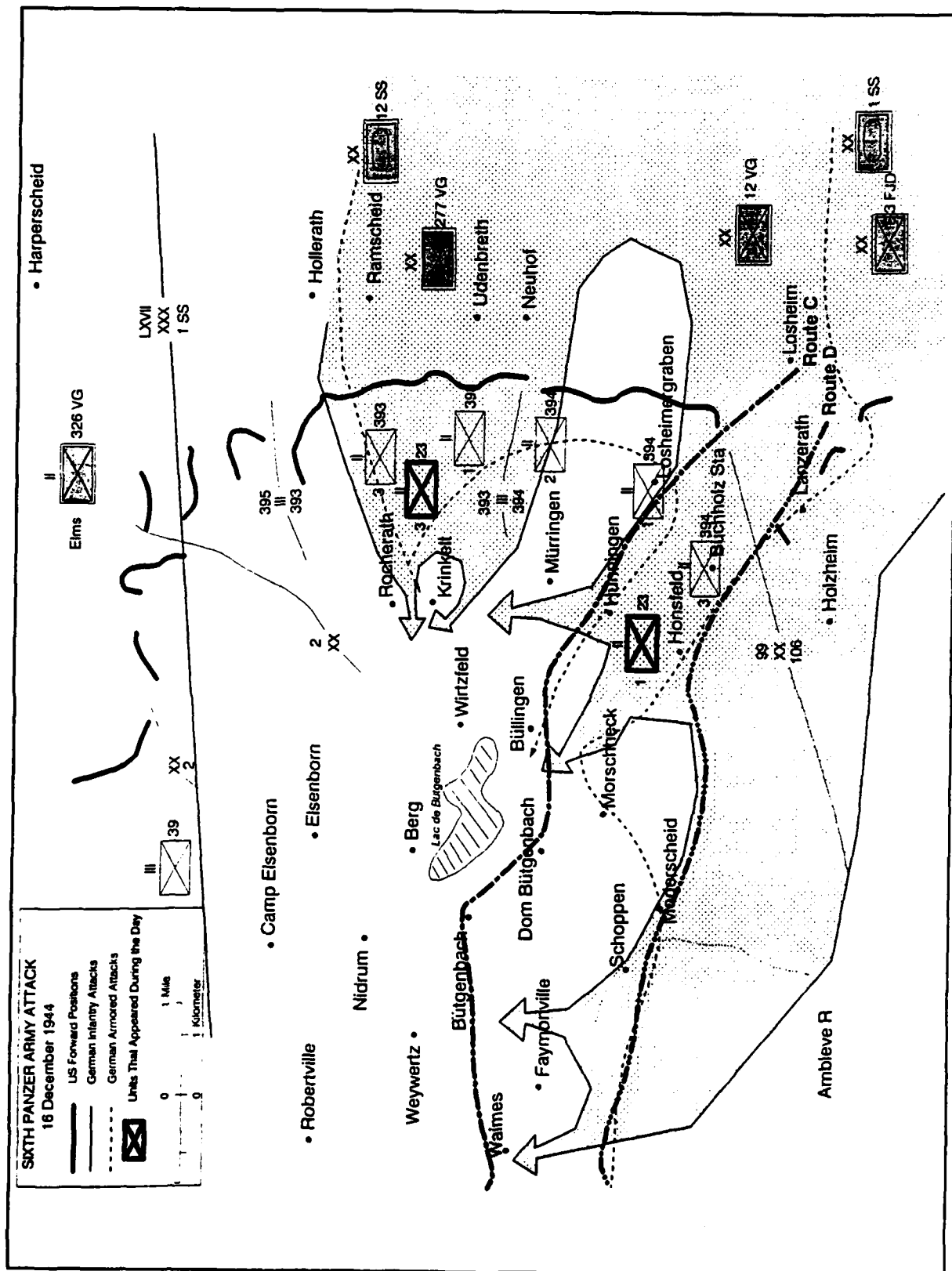
November. Like the 2d Division, the 1st was sent to the Ardennes to recuperate in early December, being short more than 3,300 men, most of them from the front-line combat elements.

THE FIGHT FOR KRINKELT-ROCHERATH

December 16, 1944: Assault on the 99th

At 0530, the German attack opened with a heavy artillery barrage which lasted until about 0700 (*Figure 2*) with German searchlights creating artificial moonlight to aid their advance. Occupying a refused position at the left rear of the regiment, 3/394 was probably the first unit to encounter the German attack. At Buchholz Station, L Company had its breakfast interrupted by Germans in march column and drove them back after a stiff fight at close quarters. To the east, advancing units of the 12th VGD made their first encounter with 1/394 near Losheimergraben, losing a self-propelled gun [*Action 1*]. But the 12 VGD was not able to strike hard at the 1/394 until about noon, after a tortuous approach march. The battalion held most of the company positions but was badly hurt; regiment pulled units from the 3rd battalion to reinforce the depleted unit. On the 1st battalion's right flank the German attack hit the 2/394 which repulsed infantry and armor assaults with small arms and artillery [*Action 2*]. By mid afternoon the battalion had stabilized its front.

At about 0730, on the division's right flank, the 277th VGD struck hard at the 393rd regiment which defended its front with only two battalions (one battalion was attached to the 395th). Third battalion in the north lost K Company in the first rush and by 0930 was holding at the battalion CP with the remaining two companies. South of 3rd battalion, a heavy German assault pushed the 1/393 back 300 yards and destroyed most of two companies. Further, German infantry began to infiltrate through a gap created between the two battalions. To backstop the heavily pressed regiment, the 99th Division asked for and received the 2nd Infantry's reserve, the 23rd Infantry Regiment. One battalion, the 3/23, moved into a position east of Rocherath behind the 393rd.



Ninety-ninth Division ordered another of 2nd Infantry's reserve battalions, the 1/23, to move into positions previously prepared by the 99th south of Hünningen. By nightfall the battalion was in place. The remaining battalion of the 23rd regiment, the 2nd, remained north of Rocherath. South of the 99th's sector, the Germans had broken through and could be seen moving west. But at the end of the day, the 99th still held its line.

After waiting impatiently all day for the 12th VGD to break through the 394, the impetuous commander of Kampfgruppe Peiper of 1st SS Panzer commandeered some paratroopers to conduct his own penetration. During the night, the Kampfgruppe overran the defenders of Buchholz, which had been stripped of troops to reinforce 1st Battalion. By 0500 on the 17th, Peiper began to advance on Honsfeld.

December 17, 1944: 2nd Infantry Division Reinforces

In the south, the day began ominously when Peiper's battlegroup struck Honsfeld just before dawn (*Figure 3*). Occupied by 99th Division rear echelon troops and a variety of units moving to reinforce the front, the attack achieved surprise and quickly overran the Americans [*Actions 3-4*]. Peiper then detoured from route D to Büllingen in order to avoid the poor secondary road leading to Moderscheid. The Americans at Büllingen, expecting the enemy to move north to capture major supply dumps, were surprised when the Germans turned south from Büllingen back toward route D. A small reconnaissance unit sent by Peiper to Bütgenbach was stopped by an American roadblock.

Because of the now obvious seriousness of the German attack, the 2nd ID's attack was canceled, and the division commander, MG Robertson, began moving units south. Peiper's detour was a key to the 2nd ID's scheme for reinforcing the 99th. The threatened German advance from Büllingen might reach the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath and cut the line of supply and retreat of both 2nd and 99th IDs. Therefore, the first objective was to reinforce near Wirtzfeld to protect the twin villages. As the remaining uncommitted regiments of the 2nd abandoned their attack against Wahlerschied and began to move south, the lead unit, 9th

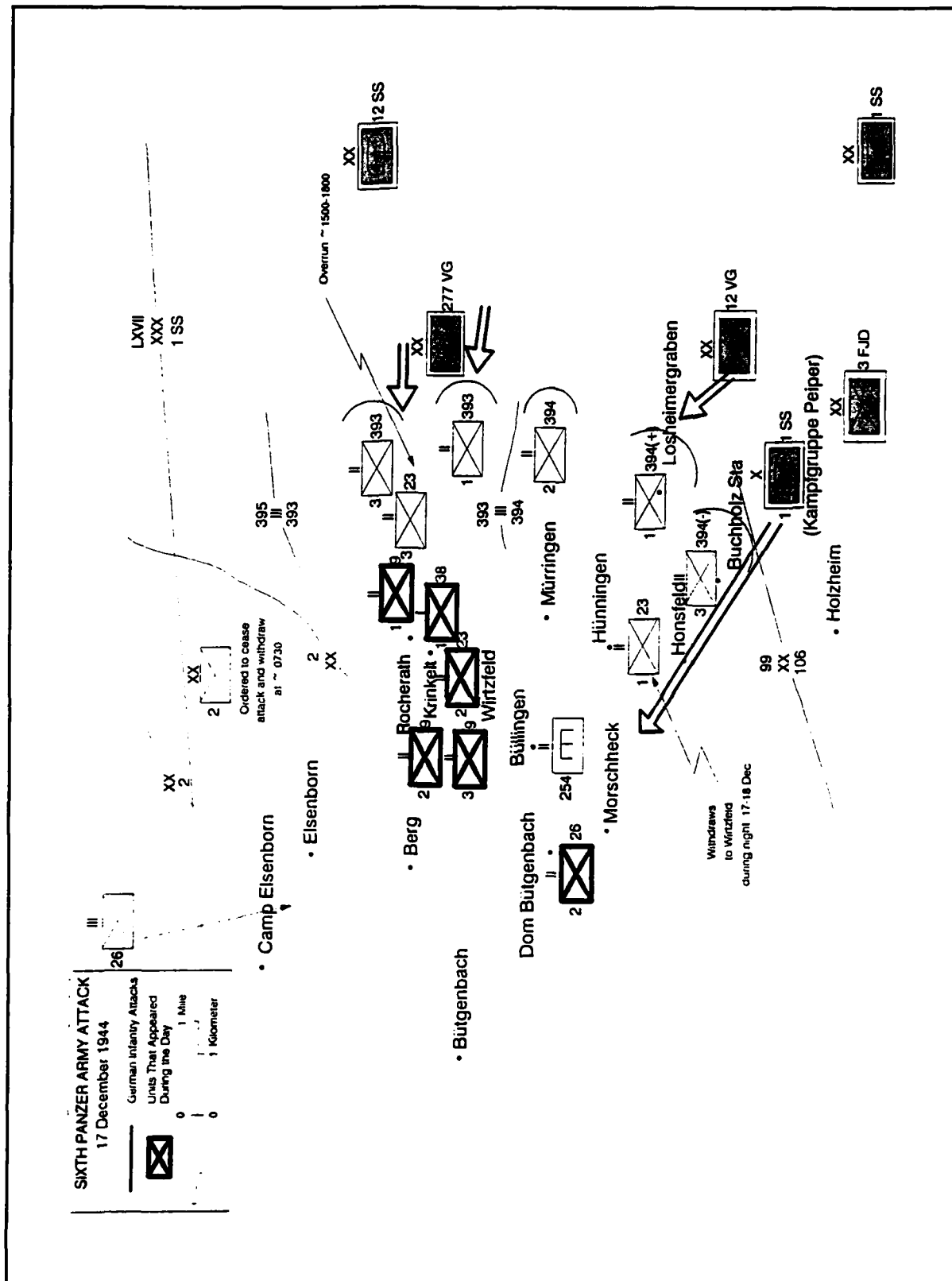


FIGURE 3. 17 DECEMBER 1944

Infantry was to move to positions south of Wirtzfeld while the trailing 38th Infantry would defend the twin villages.

Small German units of infantry and armor reinforced this concern during the morning by making forays toward the north from Büllingen. With welcome reinforcement from 1st Platoon, A Co., 801st TD Battalion, which had been in position east of Hünningen, the 1/23 stopped these German advances [*Actions 5-6*].

In its sector, the 394th near Losheimergraben suffered a strong German attack just after dawn. By noon, the town had fallen, and during the afternoon the survivors of the regiment began withdrawing toward Mürringen. Later that afternoon, the Germans finally turned their attention to the 1/23 south of Hünningen, striking that unit at 1600. The Americans repulsed the attack but lost most of Company B before withdrawing to Wirtzfeld during the night.

Early on the 17th, the tired 3/393 counterattacked west to clear its rear and then east to regain the positions lost the previous day. By 1000, they collided with an attacking German battalion, reinforced by tanks parceled out from 12th SS to strengthen the attack. The Americans were forced to retreat through the 3/23, and 1/393 fell back to a position abreast of the 3/23 by 1400. The 3/393 had barely passed through American lines when the Germans struck hard at the 3/23 [*Actions 7-10*], and by dark the shattered battalion had to withdraw. This action isolated the 1/393, which withdrew cross country to Wirtzfeld the following day. Wearily, the 3/393 moved forward again to defend Rocherath, and at the end of the day still held the town.

General Robertson had spent his day shepherding the movement of his division to the south. When the Germans attacked the 3/23, he recognized the threat to his flank and diverted K company, 3/9 and then the entire 1/9 to back up 3/23. By dusk, the 1/9 was in position in front of Rocherath, and the 1/38 established a defense east of Krinkelt [*Action 20*]. Both of these battalions were reinforced by tanks and tank destroyers. During the night, German armor and infantry launched a heavy but poorly coordinated attack against the villages. Penetrating the infantry's defenses, the Germans were able to get men and tanks

into the towns. But after wild fighting during the night, the American defenders managed to hunt down and eliminate the Germans.

December 18, 1944: 12th SS Panzer tries to break through

The hours before dawn at Rocherath-Krinkelt were ominously quiet as the Americans sought to reorganize after the confused fighting during the night. Since the 277 VGD had failed to break through and free the 12th SS to advance, the Commander of the Hitler Jugend Division decided to take the task for himself. Just before light, the Germans began coordinated tank-infantry assaults against the U.S. positions [Actions 21-23] (Figure 4). The 1/9 fought itself to destruction while withstanding the German attack against Rocherath for nearly six hours, enough time for the 2/38 to move into position and permit the battered 9th infantrymen to withdraw [Actions 11-19]. During the day, the Germans again managed to penetrate into the villages with tanks and infantry, but the Americans eliminated them in close combat. After fighting all afternoon, the 2/38 still held Rocherath [Actions 24-25].

At Krinkelt, German assaults also began just before dawn. Though repulsing the main attacks, the Americans could not prevent German tanks from penetrating as far as the 1/38's command post in Krinkelt [Actions 28-30]. But at day's end, the German armor was smoking and destroyed. During the night, German infiltrators continued to pressure both villages, but the Americans mopped them up by dawn.

Failure to capture the twin villages after two days of heavy fighting convinced the Germans that 12th SS Panzer would have to find another way to route C. The division began shifting to the south and finally assembled a Büllingen, days behind schedule, to begin its advance toward Bütgenbach. There it would find the 1st Infantry Division in position.

December 19-20, 1944: Withdrawal to Elsenborn Ridge

For their part, the American mission of protecting the withdrawal of the 99th Infantry was fulfilled during the night of 18-19 December as the last units of that division withdrew through the 2nd. With sharply weakened armor support, German infantry continued their assault on the 19th [Actions 26-27] (Figure 5). A rain of American artillery stopped most of the attacks dead in their tracks. Although convinced it could hold the twin villages, 2nd ID had accomplished its mission and ordered a withdrawal to Elsenborn ridge during the night. Beginning at 1745, the 2nd Division units withdrew. By dawn on the 20th (Figure 6), both the 99th and 2nd divisions occupied good defensive positions on the ridge from which they easily repulsed residual German attacks in the days that followed.

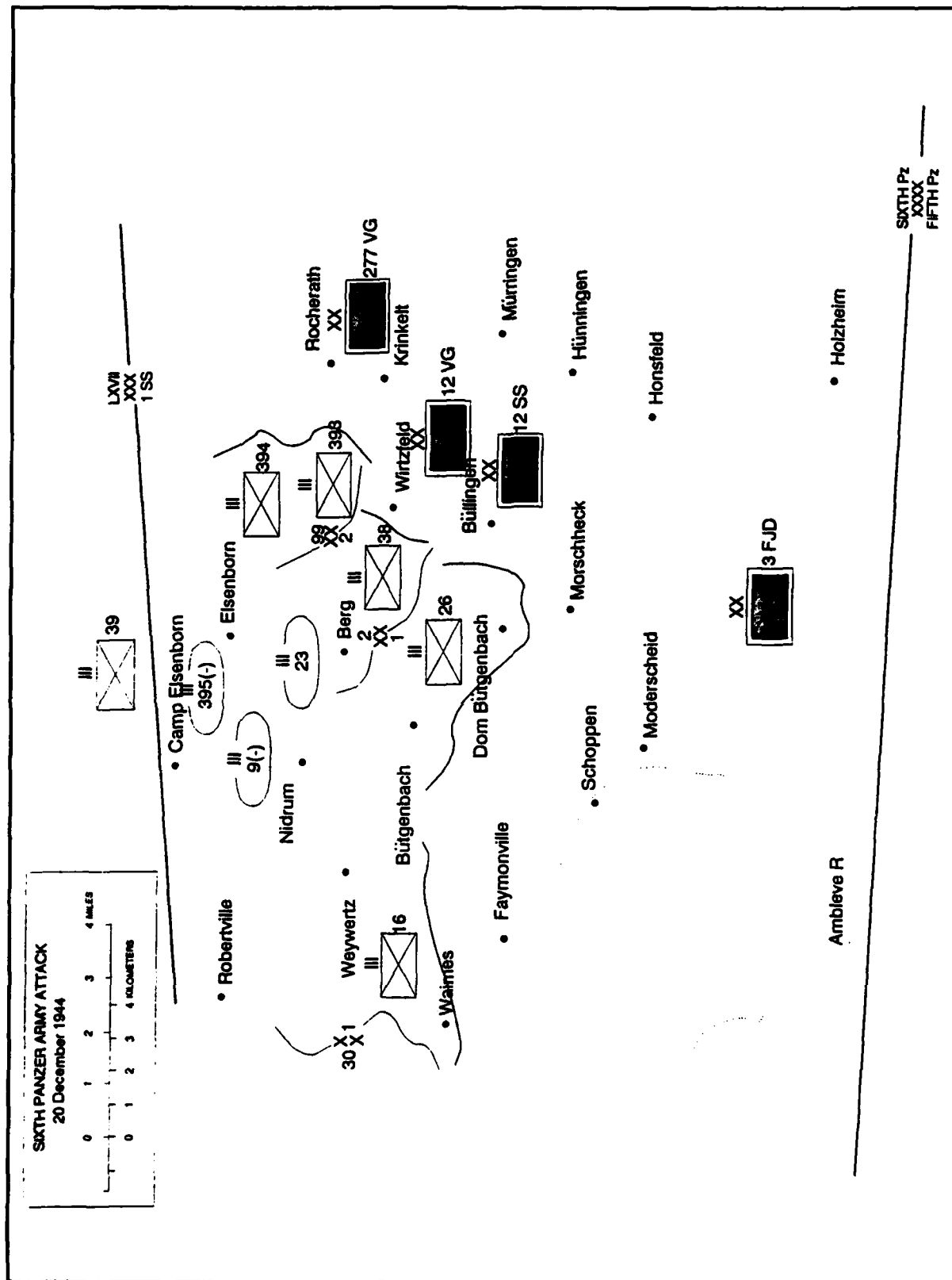


FIGURE 6. 20 DECEMBER 1944

CHAPTER 2

ACTIONS FROM THE KRINKELT-ROCHERATH ENGAGEMENT

The combat actions described in this volume come from the defensive actions of the American 99th Infantry and 2nd Infantry Divisions in December 1944 as they defended the routes needed by the German 12th SS-Panzer Division in their attempted move toward Antwerp. The fighting in this volume occurred around and in the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath, Belgium. Historical records contain sufficient information to isolate, in detail, a number of distinct actions. For this volume, SAIC has focused on those actions which involved towed antitank weapons, bazookas, or a mix of weapons where towed weapons were part of the defensive. Table 1 summarizes these actions:

NUMBER	TITLE
1	Assault Gun at Losheimergraben
2	The Sideshow
3	KG Peiper Reaches Honsfeld, Part 2
4	KG Peiper Reaches Honsfeld, Part 1
5	The Defense of Hünningen, Part 1
6	The Defense of Hünningen, Part 2
7	The Guns Retreat
8	The Forest Battle
9	The Heroism of Sergeant McGarity
10	Last Stand of the 1/23d
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25	Night Disturbance
26	Teamwork and Height Advantage
27	The Assist
28	Panthers Three and Four Knocked Out
29	The End of Panther Five's Saga

ACTION 1

Name: Assault Gun at Losheimergraben

Location: 1000 yards SE of Losheimergraben

Time: 0715 hours, 16 December 1944

The men of the 1/394th Infantry guarding the German-Belgian frontier town of Losheimergraben were amazed at the intensity of the artillery barrage which began falling on the town at 0530 on 16 December. Even the few veterans of the Normandy Campaign who had transferred to the division admitted that it was the heaviest they had ever seen.¹ When it finally lifted around 0715, the battalion commander, LtCol Robert H. Douglas, went to inspect his company positions to find out how well they had weathered the barrage. A Co covered the battalion right between the railroad and the Losheim-Losheimergraben highway, overlooking Losheim from the slopes of the Eichelsberg. B Co, in the center of the battalion position, lay astride the Losheim highway. To its left, C Co covered the gap between the 1/394th and G Co of the 2/394th to the NNE (*Figure 7*). In the B Co sector, three 57mm AT guns of the battalion AT Platoon covered the highway against a German thrust from Losheim. Heavy machine guns from D Co had been parceled out to cover the A and B Co fronts, while the battalion's 81mm mortar platoon from D Co occupied dug-in positions about 200 yards SE of the Losheimergraben crossroads, using a couple of the outlying buildings of the settlement for shelter from the weather. The front-line troops of the 1/394th had strengthened their positions by felling trees, planting mines, and stringing barbed wire across the front.²

As soon as the barrage lifted, the men of B Co were startled to see an American jeep, driven by Germans, approaching them up the hill from Losheim. The jeep halted before it reached the American line, literally under the nose of one of the 57mm AT guns which was hidden about 50 meters north of the road on the south slope of Hill 666. In the diffused glare of the spotlights which the Germans behind the Westwall were bouncing off the low clouds, the gun crew

¹ USA ETO Combat Interview "99th ID, Ardennes, 16-20 December 1944", File #182

² Cavanagh, Krinkelt-Rocherath: The Battle for the Twin Villages, p.22-23

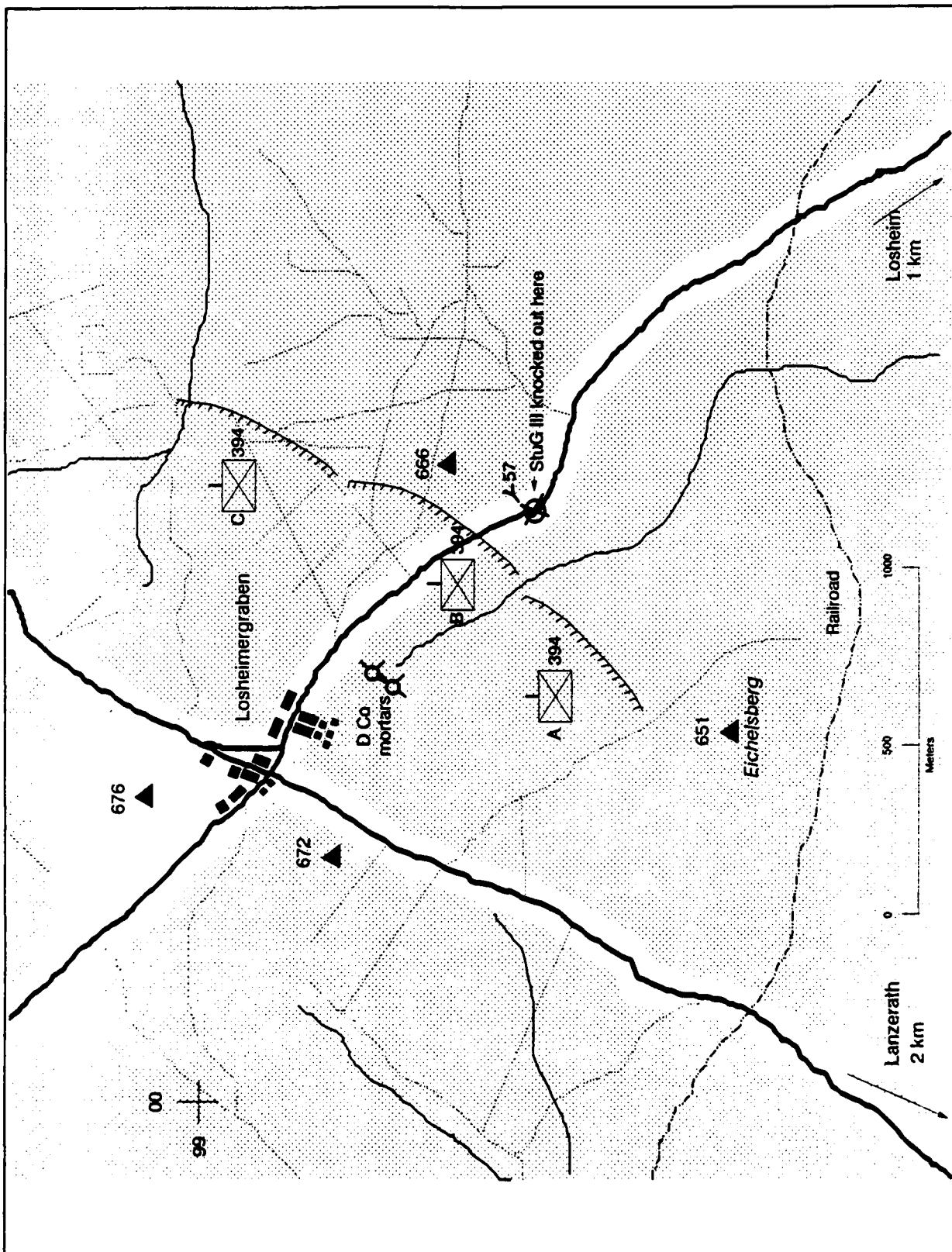


FIGURE 7. ASSAULT GUN AT LOSHEIMERGRABEN

could clearly see the jeep and its occupants, but in their surprise and uncertainty they hesitated to fire. Turning around, the jeep sped off back down the slope and into Losheim. A few minutes later it reappeared, leading what some accounts say was a tank. However, since the 12th Volksgrenadier Division had no tanks attached to it, the vehicle was instead almost certainly a sturmgeschütz (StuG III 75mm self-propelled assault gun) belonging to the division's organic 1012th StuG Co.³ Postwar accounts by the commander of the 48th Gren Regt, Col Wilhelm Osterhold, confirm this supposition, and mention that German infantry were riding on the sturmgeschütz; no such reference is made in any of the American accounts of the incident.⁴ The American AT gun crew again let the jeep pass, but fired on the assault gun as it drew up in front of their gun. The first round struck the vehicle in the right flank, knocking off a track and immobilizing it. The second and third shots penetrated the vehicle's starboard hull, with the third shot setting the assault gun aflame. Some accounts say the only survivor of the crew was the commander, a lieutenant, who was badly wounded and who staggered from the wreck. Others say the entire crew bailed out, apparently unhurt, and began firing small arms at the AT gun crew. Considering the scarcity of flank armor on the StuG III (only 30mm)⁵ and the proximity of the AT gun when it fired, the former outcome seems far more likely. The infantrymen of B Co, farther up the road toward Losheimergraben, killed the occupants of the captured jeep with small arms fire at the same time as the assault gun was destroyed.

³ MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets, pp. 170-172; Parker, Notes from Hitler's Last Gamble, pp. 16-17

⁴ Letter, Osterhold to Richard Byers, 6 Sep 1986, Enclosure 18 of 26, File #213

⁵ von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II, p.203

ACTION 1: ASSAULT GUN AT LOSHEIMERGRABEN
0715 Hours, 16 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	3 57mm AT guns covering the road	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry		Approx 120 men - B Co, 1/394th Inf	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One d. Unknown	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One StuG III assault gun of the 1012th StuG Co, 12th VGD; one captured American jeep	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172; Parker, pp. 16-17

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Assault gun and jeep destroyed; one survivor (assault gun commander)	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
9. Artillery	None	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
10. Obstacles	None	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
11. Meteorological Data	Low clouds, some fog	Low clouds, some fog	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	0715 hours	0715 hours	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
13. Light and Visibility	Around dawn; light level higher than normal because of German spotlights reflected off low cloud cover	Around dawn; light level higher than normal because of German spotlights reflected off low cloud cover	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
14. Terrain	Hilly, wooded; vehicles confined to road	Hilly, wooded	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	50 yards	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Three AP	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach to US Infantry position	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Fairly extensive-division had been in place for a month	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise-defenders alerted by German artillery barrage and reconnaissance jeep	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p.24; MacDonald, pp. 170-172
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	36-40 rounds, depending on model	Unknown. US doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 202-203; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTION 2

Name: The Sideshow

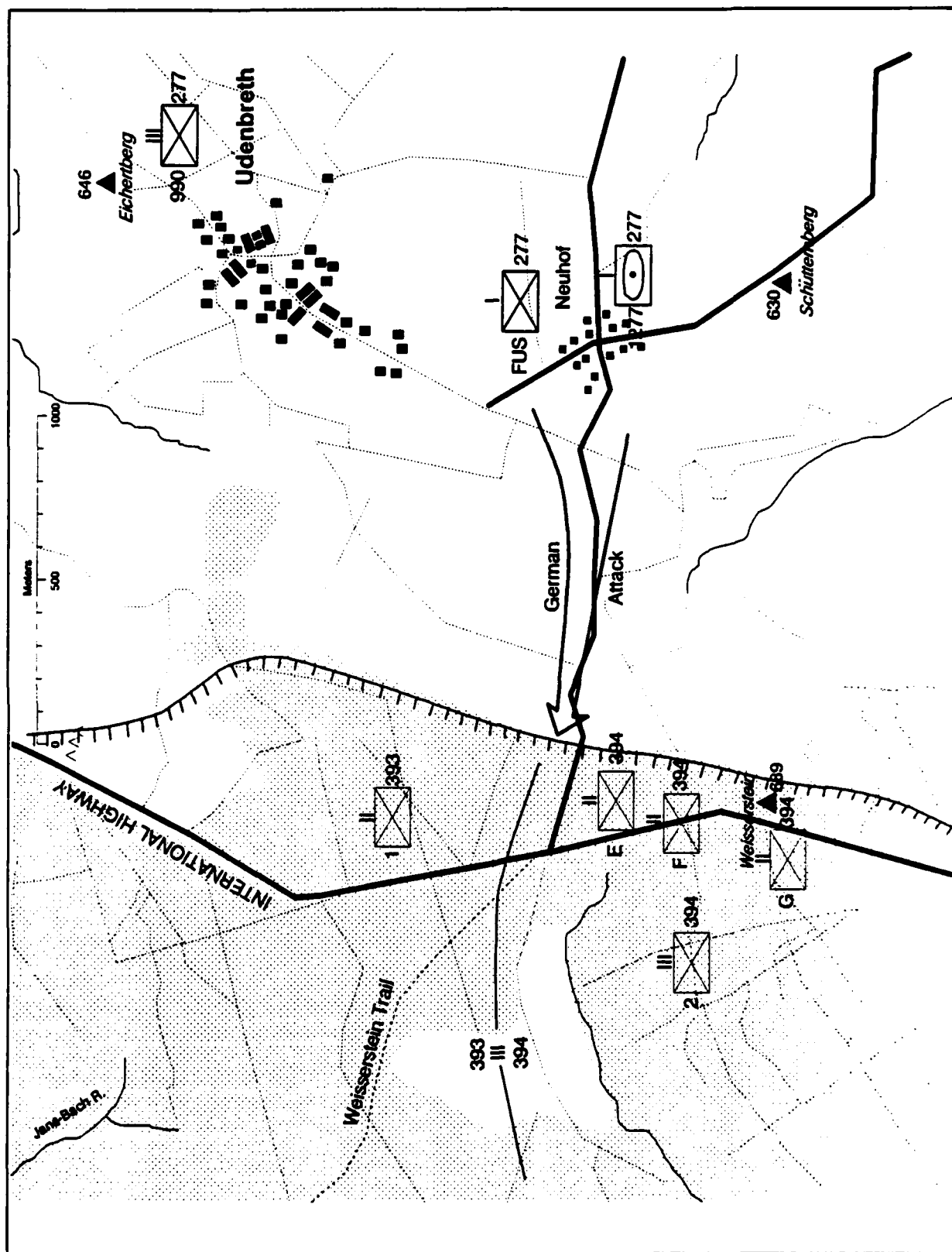
Location: 1.5 km west of Neuhoof, Germany

Time: 0830 hours, 16 December 1944

The initial German artillery barrage began hitting the positions of the 2/394th Infantry, in the woods along the International Highway west of Udenbreth, at 0530 on 16 December. The men of the 2/394th had been sleeping soundly in the log cabins which they had constructed for themselves, but as the first shells fell they quickly sought shelter in the holes they had dug outside their cabins. The barrage lasted for 90 minutes and concentrated on the battalion's left flank, from about midway in the F Co sector, north across E Co's area, and continuing north into the 393d Infantry's sector (*Figure 8*). E Co suffered 12-15 casualties from the bombardment, but F and G Cos were not significantly damaged. The GIs in their covered foxholes were not terribly concerned about the intensity of the German barrage, believing it to be merely a reaction to the attack of the 2d ID to the north.⁶

The area occupied by the 2/394th was part of the attack sector assigned to the 277th Volksgrenadier Division, a green unit recently reconstructed from two shattered divisions and composed largely of *volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans from outside Germany) and Alsatians. The division was reputed to have a "poor fighting spirit." Of the division's two forward regiments, the 989th Grenadier Regiment, reinforced by a Pionier company and a battalion of jagdpanzers (self-propelled tank destroyers), was to attack out of Hollerath and seize Rocherath, securing Rollbahn A for elements of the 12th SS-Panzer Division. The 990th Gren Regt, supported by a company of fusiliers and a company of Pioniers, assembled around Udenbreth with the intention of securing the Weisserstein Trail and thus opening a second route to Krinkelt-Rocherath. The main body of this force was scheduled to strike to the north of the 2/394th

⁶ USA ETO Combat Interviews, "99th ID, Ardennes, 16-20 Dec 1944", File #182



Inf, in the zone of the 1/393d.⁷ The only force remaining to the 277th VGD commander, Col Wilhelm Viebig, with which to attack the 2/394th was the fusilier company attached to the 990th Gren Regt, which he ordered to advance as soon as the artillery bombardment lifted. However, the fusiliers' inexperience showed itself in their failure to follow up the barrage closely enough. The GIs of the 2/394th saw the Germans advancing through the thick mist at about 0735, more than 30 minutes after the last German shells fell. American planning paid off as the GIs called down an intense artillery fire which forced the fusiliers to go to ground even before they could reach the forest's edge. They vainly tried to continue their advance until about 0800, but could not expose themselves without being cut to pieces by the accurate US artillery and automatic weapons fire.⁸

Seeing his attack in this sector falter, around 0830 Col Viebig sent forward three armored vehicles and about a platoon of infantry under a smokescreen in an attempt to regain the initiative. Since the only other armored vehicles in the 277th VGD belonged to the 277th PzJg Bn, which was attacking with the 989th Gren Regt farther north, these vehicles must have been Jagdpanzer 38t Hetzers of the 1277th Sturmgeschütz Company, which had four vehicles when the attack began.⁹ The smokescreen allowed the Hetzers and their fusilier escort to enter the woods and approach "to within hand-grenade distance" of the American positions without being spotted. As they reached the American foxhole line, T/Sgt Fred Wallace of G Co, 2/394th Inf, called the 99th ID's general support artillery battalion and requested fire on his own position in order to stop the German advance. The response from the artillery was immediate and devastating, as a heavy concentration of 155mm shells fell among the advancing Germans. Wallace and his men were spared the effects of the barrage by the overhead log cover on their foxholes and dugouts. The Hetzers, however, quickly reversed direction and fled back into Neuhof, while

⁷ Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", p. 415, File #198

⁸ USA ETO Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes, 16-20 Dec 1944", File #182; Cole, The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge, p.82; Cavenagh, Krinkelt-Rocherath: The Battle for the Twin Villages, p.21

⁹ Parker, Notes for "Hitler's Last Gamble", p.17; von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II, p.127

the fusiliers made another futile attempt to dislodge the Americans from their positions. By about 0900, the men of G Co had killed or captured all the remaining Germans in the area, and the threat to the 2/394th was over. Jubilant and proud of their performance in repulsing the German attack, the men of the 2/394th did not know that their action was just a sideshow, that the main German attacks were being made to their left and right, and that soon they would occupy a salient with only tenuous communication to the rear. Worse still, the battalion commander had been completely unnerved by the German barrage and attack, and would spend the rest of the day cringing in one of the log cabins with his head between his knees.¹⁰

¹⁰ USA ETO Cbt Int, "99th ID in the Ardennes, 16-20 Dec 1944", File #182

ACTION 2: THE SIDESHOW
0830 Hours, 16 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	No AT weapons mentioned	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	Three companies of the 2/394th Inf	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	One company of fusiliers (est. 120-150 men)	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. Unknown, apparently none	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Three Jagdpanzer 38t Hetzers of the 1277th StuG Co, 277th PzJg Bn	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22; Parker notes, p. 17
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	Very heavy	Virtually none	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	No hits, but enemy vehicles forced to retreat by US artillery barrage	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
9. Artillery	None	One battalion of 155mm howitzer fire stopped the enemy advance	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
10. Obstacles	Treeline at forest edge	None	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
11. Meteorological Data	Thick mist	Thick mist	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
12. Time of Day	0830 hours	0830 hours	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
13. Light and Visibility	Daylight; poor visibility due to fog	Daylight; poor visibility due to fog, woods, and German smokescreen	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
14. Terrain	Mostly open hills, but heavy woods near objective	Hilly, heavy woods	GS GS 4414

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	"Within hand grenade distance," 10-50 yards	"Within hand grenade distance," 10-50 yards	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None mentioned	"A heavy concentration of 155mm shells"	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal assault	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Extensive-dugouts with overhead log cover, log cabins, pre-registered artillery fires	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise-defenders alerted by German artillery barrage and earlier infantry attack	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	No air support. Preparatory arty barrage had little effect	No air support. Artillery solely responsible for repulsing the German attack	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	Cbt Int "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 21-22
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	40 rounds	Unknown	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 202

ACTIONS 3-4

Name: *KG Peiper* Reaches Honsfeld

Location: Honsfeld, Belgium

Time: 0500 hours, 17 December 1944

SS-LtCol Joachim Peiper, commander of the *kampfgruppe* (battlegroup) of the 1st SS-Panzer Division which bore his name, was growing impatient. The mission of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division had been to punch a hole through the American lines at Losheimergraben, allowing Peiper's armored column to advance into the Americans' rear areas along the road from Losheimergraben through Büllingen to Malmédy.¹¹ This was to have been accomplished in the first few hours of the 16 December attack, yet almost 24 hours later Peiper's tanks were still awaiting the signal to move out. Finally, around 0300 on the 17th, the frustrated Peiper ordered his panzers and panzergrenadiers to take to the road, accompanied by a battalion of paratroopers from the 3d Fallschirmjäger Division whom Peiper had attached to his force. Since the volksgrenadiers were apparently unequal to the task, Peiper was determined to force his own breakthrough to the Meuse. The columns moved out from the vicinity of Buchholz Farm and Lanzerath, where they had spent the night, down the narrow forest road toward Honsfeld. They met almost no resistance, contrary to their expectations, except from two platoons of K Co, 3/394th Infantry, around Buchholz Farm,¹² but this was quickly overcome. Before long, the leading vehicles of the force (two Mk V Panther tanks and three armored half-tracks carrying SS-panzergrenadiers) emerged from the woods just where the road they were on merged with another which was crowded with American vehicles retreating toward Honsfeld. Some of these vehicles belonged to the 18th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, which until the day before had maintained the tenuous connection between the 99th ID and the 106th ID to the south by patrolling the Losheim Gap at two-hour intervals. Rather than opening fire on the hapless American vehicles, the Germans quietly joined this column, their identity hidden by the darkness, fog, and confusion of the Americans.

¹¹ Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", p.415, File #198

¹² MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets, p.199

The 2d Platoon of A Company, 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion, consisted of three towed 3-inch guns and the attendant vehicles and crews. Two of these guns were posted about half a kilometer southeast of Honsfeld to cover the road from Lanzerath. The third gun, about 700 meters to the southwest, guarded the road that ran from Holzheim north through the forest belt known as the Schirr Busch to Honsfeld (*Figure 9*). At around 0400, the crews of the two eastern guns reported to the A Co command post that a US M3 light tank driven by Germans had gotten past them, but that the platoon leader and two other men had taken a bazooka and set off to intercept and destroy the tank. As these men reached the Honsfeld-Lanzerath road they saw a whole convoy of German tanks, half-tracks, and other vehicles, all following the captured US tank toward Honsfeld. They also observed that the crew of the M3 were speaking English.¹³ The three GIs hid by the side of the road as the convoy halted for a few moments, allowing the Americans to distinguish German infantry riding on the decks of the panzers. Soon the column started forward again, and the three Americans made their way back to their two guns. When he had returned to his platoon position, the 2d Plt leader reported by radio to the Company CP what they had seen, then with his two men set out for the platoon command post.

Meanwhile, as the vanguard of *KG Peiper* approached the stream which their road crossed before entering Honsfeld, they passed a lone US armored car on the side of the road. This armored car was commanded by Sgt George Creel of A Troop, 32d Cav Recon Sqdn, whose unit had moved to Honsfeld the night before in order to get out of the way of strong German units advancing through the Losheim Gap. Creel and his crew had been sent to outpost the road from Lanzerath by their troop commander, 1Lt Robert B. Reppa, who wanted them to give warning if the Germans approached. All night on 16-17 December, Creel and his men had seen only American vehicles, some singly and some travelling

¹³ 801st TD Bn AAR, December 1944, File #166. This may indicate that the tank was not captured at all, but was just another retreating American vehicle. This would be consistent with German accounts which say they just insinuated their panzers and half-tracks into the American vehicle column. However, it does raise the question of why the TD gun crew thought the US tank was being operated by Germans, since it is not mentioned in the 801st TD Bn AAR that the crew was speaking German, and the fog and darkness would almost certainly have prevented the TD crews from making out uniform details. On the other hand, it is known that attached to Peiper's *kampfgruppe* was a 700-man detachment from Skorzeny's commando unit with twelve Mk V Panthers crudely disguised to look like Shermans (MacDonald, p.198; he probably meant they were disguised to look like M-10s), a ruse which could work only on a dark and foggy night or at long range.

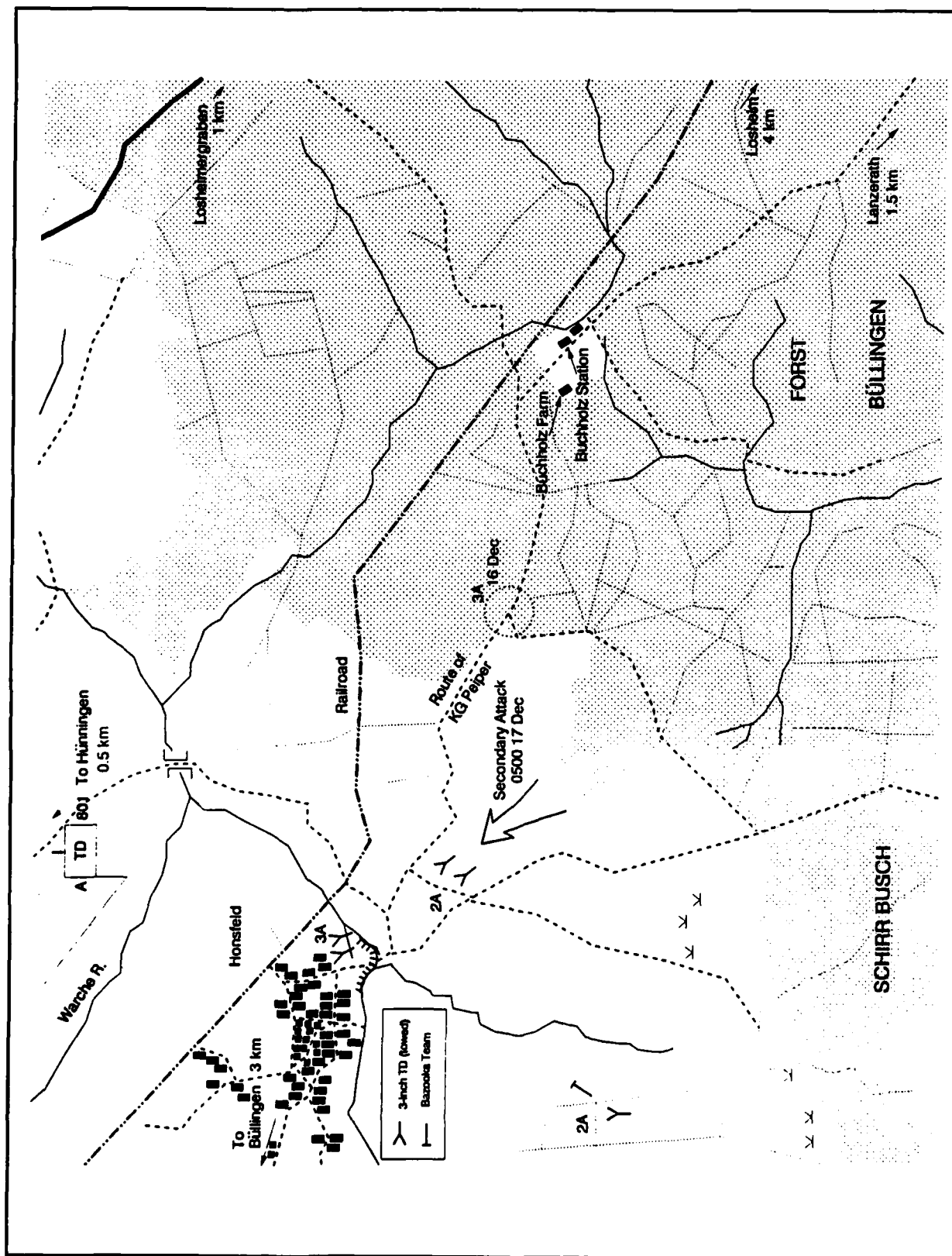


FIGURE 9. KG PEIPER REACHES HONSFELD

in groups, heading toward Honsfeld to get away from the German advance. But now, around 0500, they were astonished to see the giant Panther tanks and half-tracks full of German infantry passing casually by them, guided through the fog by a soldier walking ahead of the lead vehicle carrying a flashlight. Recovering from his shock, Creel moved to fire the armored car's small cannon at the Germans, but found that his shots would be blocked by a trailer that the car was towing. With Peiper's column stretched out before and behind them, Creel and his crew realized the futility of resistance and abandoned their vehicle in an (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to get into Honsfeld on foot to warn Lt. Reppa.

By now the lead panzers had reached the small stream which flowed south of Honsfeld, turning northeast to empty into the Warche River. Behind the stream was a thin line of American infantry, hastily established the previous evening by the American captain in charge of the 99th ID rest center in Honsfeld and increased to about company strength by the constant arrival of stragglers throughout the night. The infantry opened fire on the approaching Panthers with their small arms, and their harmless shots were quickly answered by a hail of fire from the panzers and the grenadiers following in the half-tracks. *KG Peiper's* flak tanks (37mm guns on Mk IV chassis) and flak wagons (half-tracks mounting quadruple 20mm antiaircraft guns, which had been used very effectively against the American defenders at Buchholz Station) may also have had a hand in suppressing the American resistance. After only about a minute, the US line began to crumble, the GIs running for the shelter of the buildings in Honsfeld. As they ran, they passed the two towed 3-inch guns belonging to the 3d Plt of A Co, 801st TD Bn, which had been set up around 1900 the night before among the houses at the edge of town after the platoon had pulled back from its position in the woods covering the road between Buchholz Station and Lanzerath. There were also two platoons of towed 3-inch TDs from the 612th TD Bn in Honsfeld, their crews asleep in some houses in the village, but their presence in Honsfeld was unplanned (they were en route to somewhere else and had just stopped for the night) and, consequently, they were not in position to fire on the Germans.

The 3d Plt guns, on the edge of the village on the east side of the road, heard the sound of tanks moving up the road to their right. A security patrol reported that the tanks were M3 light tanks, which was not unexpected, because a few hours earlier, at 0030, an officer from the 18th Cav Rcn Sqdn had informed one of the 801st's Recon Platoon section leaders that he would be bringing his tanks through Honsfeld that morning and said that the TD men should be careful not to fire on them. Soon, however, a second report from the security patrol said that they could hear English and German being spoken and that German Mk IV panzers were behind the M3 tanks. Immediately the 3d Plt commander ordered his crews to swing their guns to the right to fire on the German column, but the panzergrenadiers and paratroopers with Peiper's vehicles heard this activity and began firing at the TD crews, pinning them down before they could finish realigning their guns. As the US gunners returned fire with their few inherent small arms, the German tanks swung their turrets to bear and fired their main guns, damaging the 3-inch guns and wounding several of the crewmen. The 3d Plt commander ordered his men, outnumbered, outgunned, and unsupported, to fall back to the railroad track that ran through the northeast edge of Honsfeld. This they did, with each of the two crews alternately pulling back and then stopping to cover the withdrawal of the other. After they had reached the comparative safety of the railway cut, the 3d Plt leader ordered the two gun sergeants to lead their crews back to the A Co CP, across the Warche River on a hillside west of Hünningen. [Action 4]

While this was happening, other elements of *KG Peiper* were attacking the 2d Plt guns southeast of the village. The 2d Platoon commander and his two aides, on their way back to the platoon CP after identifying the German column, encountered a German patrol which had infiltrated the area, but the night was so dark and the visibility so limited by fog that the three were able to safely evade the Germans. As he finally reached his CP, the platoon leader could hear the sounds of mortar rounds and small arms fire from the direction of his guns. Doubling back, he returned to the platoon position just in time to see German infantry advancing from the woods to the south, firing their weapons and throwing hand grenades. The Americans could also hear German tanks approaching, but could not see them in the darkness. The

2d Plt leader was surprised and dismayed, because the direction from which this attack came was where infantry of the 99th ID was supposed to have been, and his guns were otherwise unsupported. The platoon leader ordered the two guns to be destroyed and the crews to head for the company CP outside Hünningen.¹⁴ [Action 3]

With American resistance in and around Honsfeld quickly evaporating, the soldiers of *KG Peiper* now moved quickly into Honsfeld. The groggy crews of the 612th TD Bn, awakened by the sound of gunfire just down the street from their bivouacs, tried gamely to fire their guns at the German vehicles out of the alleys in which they were parked, even though the guns were still limbered for towing and attached to their half-tracks. The 1st Plt, B Co, of the 612th accounted for two "self-propelled AT guns" (possibly PzJg IVs, of which there were 28 in 1st SS-PzD)¹⁵, and 2d Plt, B Co, knocked out one tank, type unknown but probably either a Mk IV or Mk V Panther. These two platoons were quickly overrun by the German infantry. The 1st Rcn Plt of the 612th's HQ Company destroyed three German "scout cars or half-tracks" before being surrounded and overwhelmed by the SS-panzergrenadiers.¹⁶ While the panzers were at a disadvantage in the narrow streets of the village, unable to traverse their turrets very far, the American crews had no small arms with which to fight off the determined paratroopers and SS men. As is related in other accounts, the atrocities which the Germans committed in Honsfeld against their American prisoners and against Belgian civilians set the tone for rest of the brutal advance of *KG Peiper* along the northern shoulder of the Bulge, including the notorious Malmédy massacre a few hours later.

¹⁴ Most of the details of these two actions were taken from the 801st TD Bn After Action Report, December 1944 (File #166), with supplemental material from MacDonald, *A Time for Trumpets*, pp. 198-202.

¹⁵ *Gliederung* for 1st SS-PzD "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", RH 10/312, Bundesarchiv Freiburg

¹⁶ 612th TD Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #22

ACTION 3: KG PEIPER REACHES HONSFELD, Part 2
0500 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Two towed 3-inch TD guns of 2d Plt, A Co, 801st TD Bn covering a trail and open ground	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Uncertain; probably platoon to company size	---	MacDonald, p. 199
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Two b. None c. None d. None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Unknown, but at least one or two	---	MacDonald, p. 199
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
9. Artillery	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
10. Obstacles	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
11. Meteorological Data	Thick fog	Thick fog	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
12. Time of Day	0500 hours	0500 hours	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy; very limited visibility	Dark, foggy; very limited visibility	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
14. Terrain	Rolling mixed	Rolling mixed	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	Unknown; due to fog, probably < 50 yards	Unknown; due to fog, probably < 50 yards	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Moderate small arms and mortar fire	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal assault	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Poor; guns not dug in nor supported by infantry	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Somewhat surprised; expected to be warned of German advance by resistance of US infantry in the woods in front of the gun positions	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Unknown	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk V Panther: 79-82 rounds; Mk IV: 87 rounds	Full load of 40 3-inch TD rounds assumed, with mix of AP and HE	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 199; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTION 4: KG PEIPER REACHES HONSFELD, Part 1
0500 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Two towed 3" TD guns of 3d Plt, A Co, 801st TD Bn covering road into Honsfeld from the SE	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three half-tracks full of panzergrenadiers (c. 60 men) from KG Peiper, 1st SS-PzD fired small arms at the gun crews	---	MacDonald, p. 199
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Two b. None c. None d. None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One captured American M-3 Stuart light tank; at least two Mk V Panthers of KG Peiper, 1st SS-PzD	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209); MacDonald, p. 199
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
7. Infantry or Crew Casualties	None recorded	Several crew men wounded by small arms fire	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
9. Artillery	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
10. Obstacles	None	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
11. Meteorological Data	Thick fog	Thick fog	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
12. Time of Day	0500 hours	0500 hours	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
13. Light and Visibility	Dark; foggy; visibility poor	Dark; foggy; visibility poor	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
14. Terrain	Open rolling; outskirts of village	Open rolling; outskirts of village	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	Short; < 100 yards (?)	Short; < 100 yards (?)	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Heavy small arms; several tank main gun rounds (probably HE)	Light small arms; no AT	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal assault down road	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Poor; guns not concealed or fortified, nor supported by infantry	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Completely surprised; thought at first that it was a column of friendly tanks	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	At least several were available for overwatch, though none are mentioned as having been specifically committed to this role	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk V Panther: 79-82 rounds	Full load of 40 3-inch TD rounds assumed, with mix of AP and HE	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 199; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTIONS 5-6

Name: The Defense of Hünningen

Location: Hünningen, Belgium

Time: 17 December 1944

The American line in the 99th Division zone continued to disintegrate as the morning of 17 December wore on. Survivors of the 393d Inf withdrew through the Krinkelter Wald, passing through the new positions of the 3/23d Inf who had just arrived at the Ruppenvenn to back them up. The 394th Inf, or what was left of it, was retreating from its positions around Losheimergraben and in the woods to the north (*Figure 10*), trying to reach the village of Mürringen where the regimental commander, Col Don Riley, hoped to be able to reorganize his battered and exhausted troops. Right on Riley's heels were the equally battered and exhausted grenadiers of the 48th Gren Regt, who had suffered tremendous losses pushing Riley's men back this far. In pursuit of the 394th Inf, the grenadiers stopped to regroup when they broke out of the forest and onto the high ground east and southeast of Mürringen. Before they could continue their advance, they had to eliminate a new point of resistance--the village of Hünningen, which had marked the southern end of the V Corps line in the area since the breakthrough of KG Peiper at Honsfeld and Büllingen earlier in the morning. In fact, by about 1000, Hünningen was surrounded on three sides--east, south, and west--by German-held territory, making it a very precarious and potentially disastrous position for any unit that tried to hold it.

That task fell to the 1st Bn of the 23d Inf Regt, formerly the division reserve of the 2d ID but attached to the 394th Inf since about 2330 the previous night. The men of the 1/23d had loaded onto trucks at their bivouac at Camp Elsenborn for the midnight drive to Hünningen, their mission being to occupy "secondary defensive positions"¹⁷ in support of the 394th Inf. Now, 10 hours later, their defense of the little hilltop village of Hünningen would determine whether or not the Germans could roll up the US flank on the

¹⁷ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

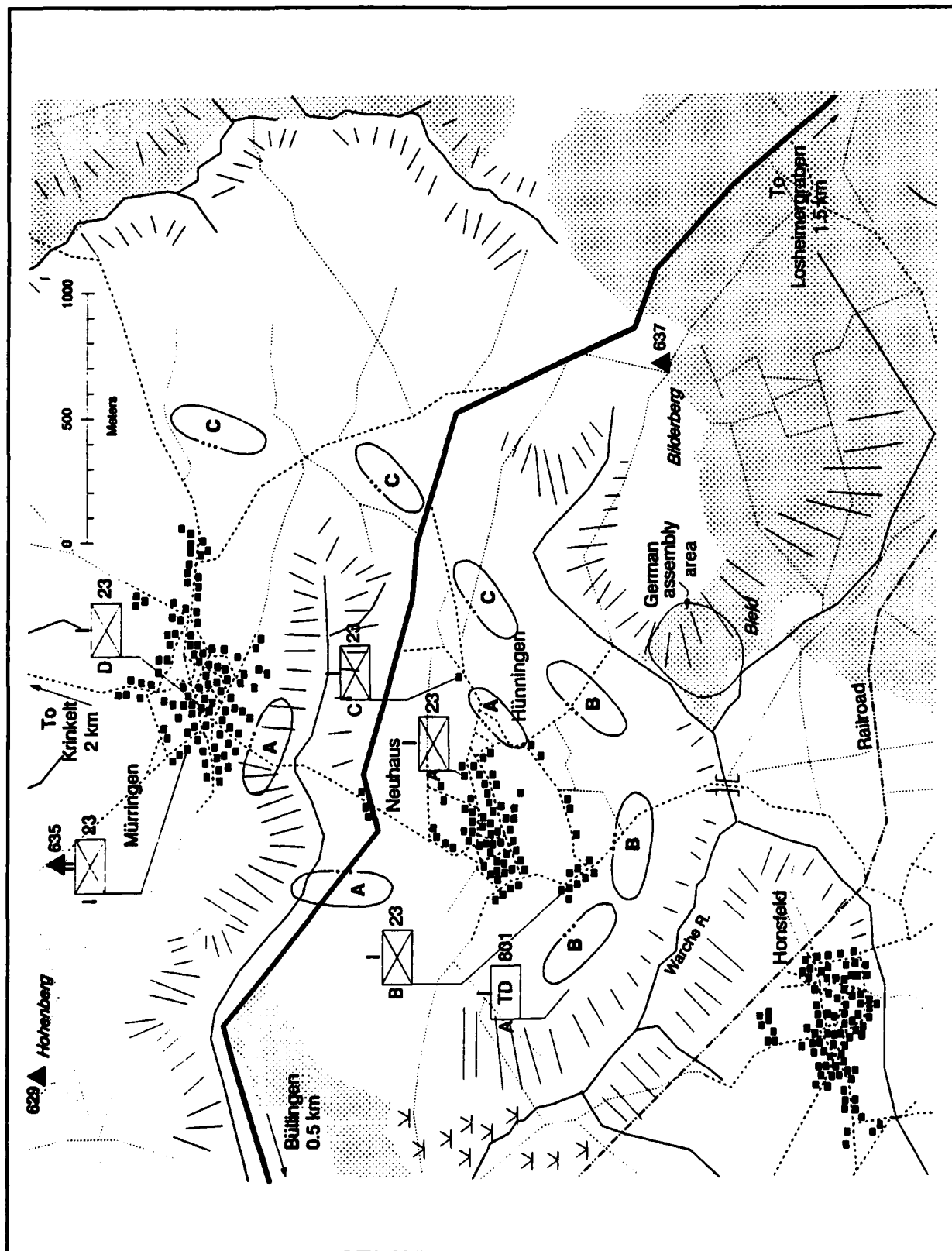


FIGURE 10. THE DEFENSE OF HÜNNINGEN

northern shoulder of the Ardennes penetration.

This defense was a large task for a single battalion, especially on so short notice. The battalion commander, LtCol John H. Hightower--"a great hulk of a man"¹⁸--had his men begin digging in as soon as they detrucked, and by 0600 this was largely completed. C Company held the battalion's left in a great arc extending from the slopes of the Kaltenburgsknipp hill to the east edge of Hünningen itself, while B Co dug in just outside the southern edge of the village, on the top of the hill overlooking the Warche River. The total frontage covered by B Co was 1500-1700 yards; C Co's was about 1800 yards. [See Figure 10] These were large frontages for such small units; B Co averaged 25-30 yards between foxholes.¹⁹ A Company, in a semi-reserve position, had one platoon defending Hünningen from the west, another platoon east of the town covering a gap in B Co's line, and a third platoon farther north on the southern edge of Mürringen.²⁰ From their position atop Hill 619, the 1/23d could hear, and occasionally catch a glimpse of, the tail end of *KG Peiper* moving northwest along the Honsfeld-Büllingen road throughout the morning, but the thick fog over the river prevented them from calling down artillery on the enemy column. Nevertheless, one section of towed 3-inch guns from 1st Platoon, A Co, of the 801st TD Bn had been ordered to Hünningen at daylight on the 17th with orders to interdict the Honsfeld-Büllingen road, and the crew had set up on the west slope of Hill 619 facing the south.²¹ They were determined to exact some sort of toll on the Germans, so they opened up on the column across the river at a range of about 1000 meters as soon as there was enough light for them to see by, about 0700. According to one source, the gun knocked out four Mk IV tanks and one half-track with these long-range flank shots.²² [Action 5] As a result, however, the German tanks, possibly aided by their artillery, began firing back at the gun, and the resulting explosions

¹⁸ MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets, p.388

¹⁹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176

²⁰ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173

²¹ 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #209

²² 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #209

wounded the TD platoon leader and kept the crew suppressed. Intermittent artillery fell on the 1/23d's positions around Hünningen for the rest of the morning.

At around 1030, B Co of the 1/23d reported German vehicles gathering at the edge of the rectangular spur of woods which jutted out from the Buchholz Forst, an area known as the Bield. They may have been assembling for an attack against Hünningen, but more likely they were seeking cover from the American P-47 fighter-bombers which were pounding the Honsfeld-Büllingen road from time to time.²³ A pair of towed 3-inch guns from the 801st TD Bn, who had also escaped from *KG Peiper* in Honsfeld that morning, happened to be set up in the area of 3d Plt, B Co, overlooking the Bield, about 800 yards away. Despite the fog and the cover of the woods, one of the two guns opened fire on the vehicles, and in six shots it scored five direct hits and destroyed four of the twelve vehicles. The remaining eight quickly withdrew further into the trees to escape the murderous TD fire. [Action 6]

The exact type and origin of these twelve vehicles is something of a mystery. Later secondary accounts label them as Mk IV panzers, although there is no direct evidence in the primary sources to support this claim.²⁴ Since no tanks (in the sense of turreted, tracked armored vehicles with large-caliber guns) were attached to either the 12th VGD or the 277th VGD, then if these really were Mk IVs, they would have had to come from one of the two SS panzer divisions of I SS-Panzer Korps. The 12th SS-PzD was yet to be committed to the battle, and even then not in this sector but several miles north in the forest along the Schwarzenbruch and Weisserstein Trails. Elements of *KG Peiper* of the 1st SS-PzD were still in the area, but if these dozen "tanks" came from that unit, they were considerably off course.²⁵ The Bield was in the zone of the 12th VGD, which had only one unit of armored

²³ Cole, *The Ardennes*, p.94; USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-2- Dec 1944" File #173

²⁴ Compare US ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "twelve tanks and an unknown number of infantry" with Cole, p.94 "twelve Mk IV tanks had appeared southeast of Hünningen" and Cavanagh, pp.56-57 "twelve Mk IV Panther [sic] tanks".

²⁵ The main body of *KG Peiper* was at that time centered around the villages of Möderscheid and Schoppen, 7-9 km to the west.

vehicles attached to it on the 17th: the 12th Panzerjäger Abteilung, whose 1012th StuG Co had had only six battleworthy StuG III assault guns available when the attack started on the 16th. Two or three of those had since been knocked out in the attacks on Losheimergraben, so it seems unlikely that the dozen vehicles assembling in the Bield were from that unit. The alternative is that these were not "tanks" at all, but some other sort of large vehicle. They may have been flakpanzers (37mm AA guns on Mk IV tank chassis) or flak wagons (quadruple 20mm AA guns mounted on half-tracks) which could have come from the 12th VGD's organic flak unit, or perhaps from the 6th Pz Army's flak units, which are known to have been in the general vicinity. Given the poor visibility conditions, what with the fog, the woods, and the American gunners facing southeast in the general direction of the rising sun, and knowing that large German armored forces were in the area at the time, it is not impossible that they mistook the vehicles in the woods for something more threatening than they really were.

ACTION 5: THE DEFENSE OF HÜNNINGEN, Part 1
0700 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	One towed 3-inch TD gun of 1st Plt, A Co, 801st TD Bn on west side of Hünningen, on hillside overlooking the Honsfeld-Büllingen road, 1000 meters away	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. One b. None c. None d. None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Four Mk IV tanks and one half-track of KG Peiper, 1st SS-PzD	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	Unknown; perhaps as many as 20 riding in the half-track	Gun platoon leader wounded by return tank fire	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Four Mk IV tanks and one half-track of KG Peiper, 1st SS-PzD	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
9. Artillery	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
10. Obstacles	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
11. Meteorological Data	Thick fog, low clouds	Thick fog, low clouds	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
12. Time of Day	0700 hours	0700 hours	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; visibility about 1000 yards	Dawn; visibility about 1000 yards	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
14. Terrain	Open, hilly	Open, hilly	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	1000 yards	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown	Unknown number of 3-inch TD rounds, assumed to be AP	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Moving along highway parallel to US defense line	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Poor; guns had only been in position a short time. However, there was a river between them and the enemy	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Exact size and composition of German force unknown at the time	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk IV: 87 rounds	Full load of 40 3-inch TD rounds assumed, with mix of AP and HE	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 199; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTION 6: THE DEFENSE OF HÜNNINGEN, Part 2
1030 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Two towed 3-inch TDs on hillside SE of Hünningen, overlooking forest in which German vehicles were assembling	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	B Co, 1/23d Inf (approx. 120-150 men)	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None mentioned	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Two b. None c. None d. None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	12 unidentified German vehicles	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
7. Infantry Casualties	Unknown; none mentioned	None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Four vehicles destroyed by five direct hits	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
9. Artillery	None	None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
10. Obstacles	None	Vehicles hiding inside edge of forest	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
11. Meteorological Data	Foggy	Foggy	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	1030 hours	1030 hours	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
13. Light and Visibility	Overcast and foggy day; visibility 1000+ yards	Overcast and foggy day; visibility 1000+ yards	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
14. Terrain	Hilly, mixed	Hilly, mixed	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	800 yards	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Six rounds, 3-inch AP	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Assembling inside forest edge	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Poor; guns exposed on hillside	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cole, p. 94; Cavanagh, p. 56-57
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Unknown; depends on vehicle type	Full load of 40 3-inch rounds assumed, with mix of AP and HE	FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTIONS 7-10

Name: The Forest Battle

Location: Krinkelter Wald, Belgium

Time: 16-17 December 1944

The failure of the 989th Grenadier Regiment to break completely through the American lines west of Hollerath on 16 December posed a serious threat to the 6th PzArmy's timetable. The grenadiers had followed the preliminary artillery barrage very closely, and achieved a greater measure of tactical surprise than perhaps any other German unit on the entire Ardennes front. Their initial attack had completely wiped out two platoons of K Co, 3/393d Infantry, which were blocking access to the Schwarzenbruch Trail. This trail was one of only two routes usable by tanks that penetrated the Krinkelter Wald, the forest between the Westwall and the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath, and it was vital for the 12th SS-PzD's mission of seizing Rollbahns A and B and advancing to the Meuse. As morning turned into afternoon, however, the Americans halted their retreat through the forest as LtCol Jack. G. Allen, commander of the 3/393d, established an all-around defense, centered on his battalion command post in the heart of the forest, which stopped the German infantry cold. Even the commitment of a battalion of 12th SS-PzD's panzergrenadiers, the I Bn of the 25th SS-PzGren Regt under SS-Capt Alfons Ott²⁶ reinforced by a company of Pioniers and a company of towed howitzers, could not dislodge the Americans. By afternoon, the Germans had penetrated no farther than the point where the Schwarzenbruch Trail crossed over the Jans-Bach creek. There, the oncoming darkness and the exhaustion of the German troops, particularly those of the 277th VGD, forced a halt to their advance, less than four kilometers from their starting positions (*Figure 11*). The German infantry had suffered very heavy losses, especially among the officers and NCO's who had to lead their green and unmotivated troops by example from the front.²⁷ That night, while the men of the surrounded 3/393d struggled to keep warm in their hastily-dug foxholes in the center of the

²⁶ Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", p.417-418, File #198

²⁷ Meyer, op. cit., p.416, File #198

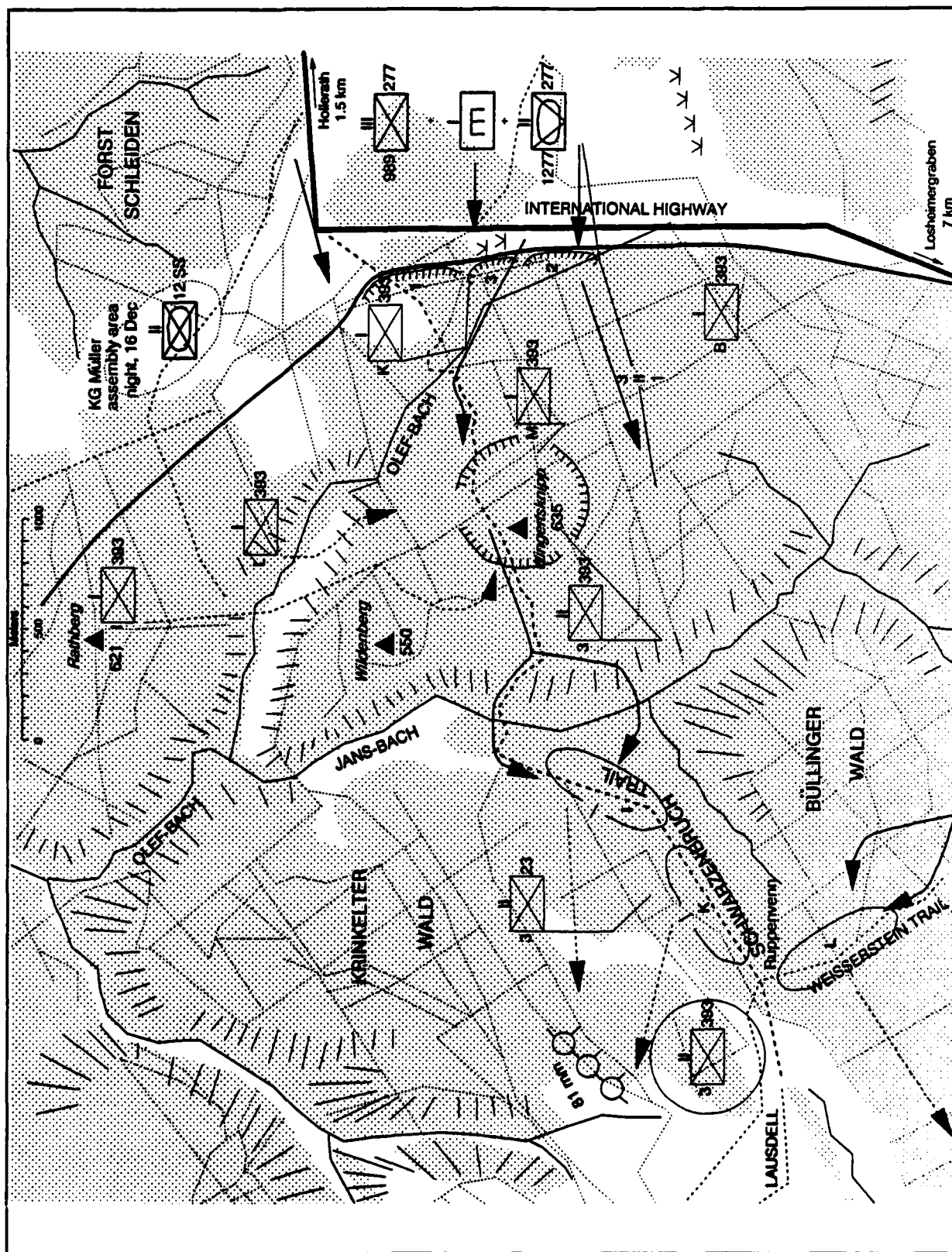


FIGURE 11. THE FOREST BATTLE

forest, KG Müller of the 12th SS-PzD moved forward. This *kampfgruppe* included the 12th SS-PzJg Bn, with 22 PzJg IV/48s; the headquarters of the 25th SS-PzGren Regt and two battalions (II and III) of that regiment; a towed flak company; the II Bn of the 12th SS-Arty Regt with 105mm howitzers; and a company of Pioniers.²⁸ Like its sister division, the 1st SS-PzD, "Hitlerjugend" would be forced to create its own breakthrough in order to reach the Meuse.

While the Germans were marshalling their strength for the next day's attack, the Americans on the other side of the forest scrambled to establish another defense line in front of the Germans at the west edge of the woods. Since there were only two roads that passed through the dense woods, and since they intersected at the west side of the forest at a place known locally as the Ruppenvenn, this seemed to Gen Robertson of the 2d ID to be the most logical place to block the German advance. The only unit available for this task was the 3/23d Inf, part of the 2d ID's reserve for the Wahlerscheid attack. As soon as the situation in the Krinkelter Wald became clear at the 2d ID headquarters, Gen Roberts ordered the 3/23d out of its barracks at Camp Elsenborn and onto trucks bound for the Ruppenvenn. They arrived at that place at about 1630 hours on the 16th, just as the winter sun was setting behind them. I Co moved a few hundred yards down the Schwarzenbruch Trail and established a roadblock. They knew that the remnants of the 3/393d were somewhere in the dark woods in front of them; they knew the Germans were there too. L Co dug in on the battalion right, covering the Weisserstein Trail. K Co filled in the gap between them, and blocked the exit from the forest.²⁹ All three companies were stretched thin, and the thick woods made it almost impossible for them to coordinate their positions or activities. To make matters worse, "...[the] battalion was none too well prepared for defense, having arrived with no mines and very little ammunition. Trucks bringing

²⁸ Pellud, The Battle of the Bulge: Then and Now, p.91; Meyer, op cit, p.420, File #198

²⁹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176

ammunition forward found the road between Büllingen and Krinkelt barred by the Germans and never reached the battalion."³⁰

On the extreme left of the 3/23d's position, pointing like a finger down the trail at the German penetration, was I Co's 1st Platoon, commanded by 1Lt Long H. Goffigon. 1st Plt occupied a line of previously-dug foxholes which straddled the trail. Some of those holes even had overhead log cover, but "there were not enough holes for the entire platoon and the crews of the two heavy machine guns that arrived later..."³¹ Those men of 1st Plt unlucky enough to have to dig their own foxholes found it a daunting task, equipped as they were with only personal entrenching tools to use against the hard-frozen soil. A load of picks and shovels, along with some rifle and machine gun ammunition, finally arrived at the company by a roundabout route at about 2100, but this did little to alleviate either problem, ammunition or cover. In addition, Lt Goffigon realized that his 35-man platoon and two machine gun crews were occupying a position whose left flank hung in the air and was directly athwart the only route through the forest that the German force in the northern part of the forest could use to get to the twin villages.

Whether that force would contain tanks or not Goffigon did not know, but if it did the prospects of 1st Platoon's holding its position were not bright. As mentioned previously, the 3/23d had left its mines behind at Camp Elsenborn in its haste to move to the Ruppenvenn (this was a calculated decision, not an oversight). In addition, in the entire battalion there were only seven bazookas with three rounds apiece.³² When Goffigon's platoon had occupied its position early in the evening, "there were two 57mm AT guns from the 393d Infantry [there already], but sometime during the night the crews of those two guns hitched up and slipped away."³³ [Action 7]

³⁰ Cole, The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge, p.99

³¹ MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, p.375

³² USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176

³³ MacDonald, op cit, p. 375

Upon their arrival, the men of the 3/23d had been told that their mission, come daylight on the 17th, would be to attack to the east to relieve the surrounded 3/393d in the Krinkelter Wald and to help that battalion reestablish its former positions along the International Highway.³⁴ However, radio communication with the surrounded battalion was regained during the night, and Col Allen said his situation had stabilized, so the 3/23d's mission was altered to that of merely occupying back-up positions. (The fact that the Americans in the Krinkelter Wald, a force of less than battalion strength, thought they had the situation under control when in fact they were surrounded by the equivalent of three German battalions reinforced by armor, is a classic example of the fog of war.)

As the cold night wore on, German artillery began a steady pounding of the Ruppenvenn crossroads, probably firing at map coordinates since there was no way for them to know that the 3/23d had moved into the area. They may have been trying to interdict any elements of the 3/393d attempting to infiltrate through the woods back to Krinkelt-Rocherath. Most of the rounds fell in the K Co area, but no casualties were recorded.³⁵

Before dawn, a few stragglers from the 3/393d Inf began arriving at the 3/23d position, trying to get out of the forest before the Germans could renew their attack. By this time, Col Allen's force numbered no more than 475 effective.³⁶ Around 0730, just before sunrise, a platoon of two Sherman tanks from C Co, 741st Tk Bn, commanded by 1Lt Victor Miller, arrived at the Ruppenvenn and placed themselves at the 3/23d's disposal. They were directed to positions just behind Lt Goffigon's 1st Platoon line.³⁷

At 0800, Col Allen's 3/393d launched a counterattack to the west to clear the Schwarzenbruch Trail and reopen their line of communication with the

³⁴ MacDonald, op cit, p.375

³⁵ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176

³⁶ Pallud, op cit, p.92

³⁷ MacDonald, op cit, p.376; 741st Tk Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #211

3/23d. The Germans were surprised by the direction of the attack and the Americans drove them off the Trail. As the GIs turned back east to restore their previous day's positions, however, they collided with KG Müller's renewed attack, consisting of a battalion of the 277th VGD, the II/25th SS-PzGren Regt, and a platoon of five PzJg IV/48s from III Platoon, 2d SS-PzJg Kp.³⁸ This was at about 1000. The lead jagdpanzer rolled down the trail toward the 3/393d's CP, but American artillery fire forced its infantry escort to seek cover. Undeterred, the jagdpanzer continued to the vicinity of the M Co CP, about 200 yards northwest of the battalion CP, but without its infantry protection it was vulnerable to American close combat weapons. Soon, one of the four US bazooka teams in the area, firing from a ditch at the side of the trail, immobilized the vehicle by hitting one of its tracks. [Action 8] At least some of the jagdpanzer's weapons were still functional, however, for it continued to fire its machine guns at the American infantry in the area, pinning them down and allowing the grenadiers to move closer. Before long, the remaining four jagdpanzers of the platoon approached down the trail from Hollerath. One of the GIs from L Co, Sgt Vernon McGarity, who had been wounded in the previous day's fighting,³⁹ snatched up a bazooka and quickly knocked out the leading jagdpanzer while his squad drove off the accompanying SS-panzergrenadiers. The remaining three vehicles withdrew, abandoning the now-blocked trail in order to work their way forward via the narrow tracks and firebreaks that criss-crossed the area. [Action 9]

Although the armored threat had temporarily subsided, the German infantry were still swarming forward wherever possible. To support their advance, the grenadiers brought up one of the towed howitzers of 13th Kompanie, 25th SS-PzGren Regt. Sgt McGarity, after pulling a wounded comrade to safety, directed the small arms fire of his squad onto the position of this howitzer, eliminating it before it could be used. By now his men were running low on ammunition, so McGarity ran to retrieve more rounds from an ammunition hole nearby. In so doing he discovered that some of the SS-panzergrenadiers had worked around behind his squad's position and set up a machine gun,

³⁸ Pallud, op cit, p.92; Cavanagh, op cit, p.59-61; Meyer, op cit, p.422

³⁹ Cavanagh, op cit, pp.32-33

cutting off their only escape route. "In a mad rage,"⁴⁰ McGarity single-handedly killed the machine gun crew with his rifle, and for a while he and his men fought off all German attempts to reman the gun. Eventually, however, the Americans ran out of ammunition and were captured.

By 1030 the remaining three jagdpanzers and large numbers of German infantry were working their way around behind the 3/393d. His resistance weakening as more of his men were hit or ran out of ammunition, Col Allen began pulling his group back to the west. More German reinforcements, in the form of the III/25th SS-PzGren Regt and three more companies of jagdpanzers from the 12th SS-PzJg Bn, were funneling down the Schwarzenbruch Trail to add their weight to the assault. It began to look as if the 3/393d might be crushed before it could reach the 3/23d's line. Around 1100, all the wounded that would fit were loaded onto the few remaining vehicles and the 3/393d began to retreat toward Rocherath.

About two kilometers to the west, the men of the 3/23d could hear the battle raging in the forest. Before long they could hear the 3/393d convoy approaching, jeep-mounted machine guns spraying the woods on either side of the trail to minimize German interference with the withdrawal. Soon the first vehicles reached Lt Goffigon's 1st Plt, I Co. As they passed through the line, the men of the 3/393d gave the 2d ID men the little ammunition they had left (mostly small arms, few bazooka rounds or grenades).⁴¹ Only two men stayed to fight with the 3/23d; the rest continued withdrawing to the rally point near the Lausdell crossroads. As Charles MacDonald, the captain in command of I Co, put it, "To everybody in the 3/23d, it was obvious that the Germans would be close behind the withdrawing column. How long the battalion could hold; how long its ammunition would last; and how well two Shermans might deal with accompanying German tanks--on all those factors might depend the fate of those men of the 2d Division who were beginning to withdraw through the forest from Wahlerscheid to the twin villages and Wirtzfeld. Indeed, the fate of everybody in the 2d and 99th Divisions might well depend

⁴⁰ Cavanagh, op cit, p9.59-61

⁴¹ USA ETO Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176

on how long the 3/23d could hold--and when it got right down to it, upon how long Lt Goffigon and the men of 1st Plt, I Co, could hang on..."⁴²

To help prepare for the German attack, Capt MacDonald of I Co ordered Lt Miller's Shermans to cover a road junction about 500 yards to the north. Shortly thereafter, however, Lt Miller pulled his tanks back toward the Ruppenvenn, into the space between K and I Companies (He told Lt Goffigon that this was in order to obtain better firing positions). This left Goffigon's platoon entirely without anti-tank support except for its one bazooka and three rockets.⁴³

By noon, no more troops from the 3/393d were arriving at the 3/23d's lines. Lt Goffigon could see a body of troops gathering downhill from his position along the banks of the Jans-Bach, but he couldn't tell whether they were Germans massing for an attack or more retreating Americans. At 1230, however, the first German attack hit. A force of 40-50 German infantry attacked the left flank platoon of L Co, near the vertex of the two forest trails. L Co repulsed this first attack, but more Germans kept arriving until an estimated company was attacking that point. Meanwhile, on the battalion's left flank, Lt Goffigon could see tanks on the ridge across the Jans-Bach creek about 2500 meters northeast of his position, and he could hear several more that were still hidden by the trees. He radioed in a request for artillery fire, but as it began to fall on the ridge and scatter the tanks, the Germans in the Jans-Bach draw advanced up the trail and a heavy infantry attack erupted on I Co's front and left flank. The American small arms fire pinned down the Germans to the front, while Goffigon's 1st Platoon checked the left flank assault with small arms and mortar fire. Capt MacDonald called in repeated requests for artillery support, but each call was answered only by a pitiful three rounds. Six successive German attacks, by the II Bn of the 25th SS-PzGr Regt⁴⁴, were repulsed by I Co's small arms, but with each attack

⁴² MacDonald, op cit, p.377

⁴³ USA ETO Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", File #176; Cavanagh, op cit, pp.61-62; MacDonald, op cit, p.378

⁴⁴ Cavanagh, op cit, p.64

MacDonald's company grew weaker. While the German infantry kept the Americans busy, some of the jagdpanzers of the 12th SS-PzJg Bn were picking their way down the ridge and through the woods along tracks and firebreaks to positions from which to enfilade the Americans.⁴⁶ Other jagdpanzers approached right down the Schwarzenbruch trail to within 100 yards of Lt Goffigon's platoon and opened fire on the US foxholes.⁴⁸ The time was now about 1450.⁴⁷ Capt MacDonald's placement of artillery fire on the jagdpanzers had no effect; however, the sheer volume of the company's small arms fire kept the vehicles buttoned up while it decimated the accompanying panzergrenadiers. It was at this point that Capt MacDonald learned, to his dismay, that Lt Miller's tanks were unavailable, having withdrawn to the K Co area.

The jagdpanzers continued to approach until they were close enough to fire their main guns at point-blank range into the US foxholes. Goffigon's bazooka man fired two rockets at one of the vehicles, but both missed and he was killed. [Action 10] The two M Co machine guns attached to I Co continued to take a heavy toll of the German infantry but soon their ammunition was exhausted. Five German jagdpanzers were now inside the 1st Plt positions, and the panzergrenadiers launched a series of renewed attacks against I Co's front and rear. The Germans had no artillery support, but the volume of their small arms fire wiped out Goffigon's platoon. With 1st Plt destroyed, 2d and 3d Platoons fell back onto K Co's left flank and tried to form a new line, but after about 10 minutes the jagdpanzers caught up with them and overran them. At about 1500, as the last of his men scattered, Capt MacDonald and his staff burned all the maps and papers at the company CP.

Up to now, except for the initial assault against its left platoon at about 1230, L Co had had little contact with the enemy. Around 1500, some 60 men from I Co passed through the L Co area, headed for the rear. This was L

⁴⁶ Pellud, op cit, p.92

⁴⁸ Contrary to MacDonald's contention in A Time for Trumpets that the AT guns from the 393d Inf had fled the previous night, the USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview says "at this time, according to Capt MacDonald...the AT crews from the 393d abandoned their guns."

⁴⁷ 741st Tk Bn AAR, Dec 44, File #210

Co's first indication that the units to its left were pulling back. 1Lt Walter E. Eisler, Jr., the L Co commander known as "Chief" to his men, stopped the I Co stragglers and ordered them to form a secondary defense line behind L Co. Shortly thereafter, "a number of men dressed in American combat pants, combat jackets, and American helmets approached from the direction of K Co. As they reached the first line of foxholes, they opened fire on the L Co troops. According to the men of that unit, there is no doubt but that they were German troops dressed in American uniforms and were trying to infiltrate behind L Co's position."⁴⁸ Simultaneously, a strong German infantry attack hit L Co's front and both flanks. While 1st Plt provided covering fire with its few remaining rifle and machine gun rounds, L Co fell back about 200 yards. While reorganizing there, Lt Eisler received a message from Col Tuttle ordering L Co to continue withdrawing all the way into Krinkelt.

Meanwhile, with I Co gone, the Germans now struck K Co, grenadiers attacking from the front while tanks and infantry hit the left flank. 1st Plt, on the left flank, inflicted heavy casualties on the infantry but was powerless to stop the armored vehicles. The platoon's commander had been wounded earlier, so rather than retreat without orders the 1st Plt fought in place and was overrun. In what was seemingly a standard American tactic, the GIs crouched in their foxholes to let the jagdpanzers pass above them, then reemerged and engaged the grenadiers in close combat. It was a bloody melee, both sides using bayonets and swinging their rifles like clubs. The platoon's bazooka man tried to club a German with his rocket launcher but was mown down by submachine gun fire first.⁴⁹ Lt Clise, commander of 2d Plt, went to get Lt Miller's Shermans and bring them forward for support, but found that they had withdrawn again, this time out of the forest altogether. The K Co commander, 1Lt Lee Smith, ordered the remnants of his command, 2d and 3d Platoons, to fall back, just as three jagdpanzers continued down the Schwarzenbruch Trail and hit the 2d Plt's left flank. The two platoons staged

⁴⁸ USA ETO Combat Interview "German Breakthrough" File #176. There is little evidence to support this theory, since none of Skorzeny's commandos were attached to either the 12th SS-PzD or the 277th VGD, and Meyer makes no mention of such an incident or unit in his divisional history of "Hitlerjugend." Given the highly confusing situation in the forest at that time, it seems likely that this was just a tragic instance of two jittery friendly forces firing on one another.

⁴⁹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "German Breakthrough" File #176

a fighting withdrawal to a wooded draw near the edge of the woods a few hundred meters to the northwest of the trail junction, where they reformed their line. About 20 minutes later they were again hit and overrun by the jagdpanzers. This time, their withdrawal took them out of the forest and in to the open area east of the Lausdell crossroads area, where the Germans hit them with an artillery and nebelwerfer barrage which dispersed them. As they scattered, the men of K Co could see Lt Miller's two Shermans burning a few yards from the forest edge where they had engaged the leading jagdpanzers as they emerged from the trees. Miller's tanks had knocked out two of the jagdpanzers but had been destroyed by return fire from the other German vehicles. By now it was dusk, and K Co's fighting withdrawal had allowed the survivors of I and L Companies to escape from the forest and had bought time for the troops from the 9th and 38th Inf Regiments to arrive and begin constructing a new line around the Lausdell crossroads. Both I and K Cos had taken heavy losses and would not be reorganized until 20 December. Meanwhile, the Germans continued their westward advance, fated to collide next with the 1/9th Bn at the Lausdell crossroads. The outcome of this encounter would prove crucial, for the 1/9th was the last American unit between the Germans and the Wahlerscheid road, down which three of the 2d ID's battalions had yet to pass in their withdrawal to the twin villages.

ACTION 7: THE GUNS RETREAT
c. 2400 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Two 57 mm AT guns of the 393d Inf covering the Schwarzenbruch Trail near the Ruppenvenn	MacDonald, p. 375
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	I Co, 3/23d Inf (approx. 120-150 men)	MacDonald, p. 375
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	MacDonald, p. 375
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. Two d. None	MacDonald, p. 375
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	None	---	MacDonald, p. 375
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	MacDonald, p. 376
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None	---	MacDonald, p. 376
9. Artillery	None	None	MacDonald, p. 376
10. Obstacles	None	None	MacDonald, p. 376

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast	Cold, overcast	MacDonald, p. 376
12. Time of Day	Night	Night	MacDonald, p. 376
13. Light and Visibility	Dark	Dark	MacDonald, p. 376
14. Terrain	Narrow trail through thick forest	Narrow trail through thick forest	MacDonald, p. 376; GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A	N/A	MacDonald, p. 376
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	N/A	None	MacDonald, p. 376
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	None	---	
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Unknown	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	N/A; enemy had not yet arrived when guns retreated, leaving infantry unsupported	MacDonald, p. 376
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	MacDonald, p. 376
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	MacDonald, p. 376
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	N/A	Full load of 40 3-inch TD rounds assumed, with mix of AP and HE	FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTION 8: THE FOREST BATTLE
1000 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	American infantry in a hedgehog defense around 3/393d Bn CP in the Krinkelter Wald	Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cole, p. 98-99; Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Meyer, p. 422; MacDonald, p. 376
2. Strength of Defending Infantry		475 men	Pallud, p. 92
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	One battalion of SS-panzergrenadiers (I/25 SS-PzGren Regt, 12th SS-PzD)	---	Meyer, p. 422; Cavanagh, p. 59-61
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. Four	Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cavanagh, p. 59-61
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Five PzJg IV/48 Jagd-panzers from 3d Plt, 2d SS-PzJg Kp, 12th SS-PzJg Bn	---	Pallud, p. 92; Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Meyer, p. 422
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	Unknown	Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cole, p. 98-99

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzer by bazooka shot to the tracks	---	Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cole, p. 98-99
9. Artillery	None	None	
10. Obstacles	Vehicles forced to stay on the trail by the dense woods	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)
12. Time of Day	1000 hours	1000 hours	Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182); Cole, p. 98-99
13. Light and Visibility	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	
14. Terrain	Hills, dense forest	Hills, dense forest	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Fired from ditch at the side of the trail tanks were on; probably < 25 yards	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown; assume 1 bazooka round	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89; Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Moving in column down forest trail	---	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89; Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Moderate. No heavy weapons but forest channeled the German approach and gave defenders cover	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders had been engaged all the previous day with the Germans, although this was their first contact with German armor	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89; Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	Some US artillery fell on the Germans, dispensing the escorting infantry enough to let the bazookas get a shot	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89; Cbt Int, "99th ID, Ardennes" (File #182)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None; the other four jagdpanzers of this unit were too far behind to overwatch	---	Cole, p. 98-99
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. Probably about 600 rounds for 7.92mm MG	Unknown how many bazooka rockets were available	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 202

ACTION 9: THE HEROISM OF SERGEANT MCGARITY
1000 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	One GI, Sgt Vernon McGarity of L Co, 3/393d, on the side of forest trail with a bazooka	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	Parts of several companies were near by; McGarity is unknown	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	One battalion of SS-panzergrenadiers (I/25 SS-Pz Gren Regt, 12th SS-PzD)	---	Meyer, p. 422; Cavanagh, p. 59-61
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Four PzJg IV/48 Jagd-panzers from 3d Plt, 2d SS-PzJg Kp, 12th SS-PzJg Bn	---	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Pallud, p. 92; Meyer, p. 422
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	Cavanagh, p. 59-61

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One PzJg IV/48 knocked out by bazooka, blocking the trail and forcing the others to withdraw	---	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
9. Artillery	None	None	
10. Obstacles	Vehicles forced to stay on the trail by the dense woods	None	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
11. Meteorological Data	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)
12. Time of Day	c. 1000 hours	c. 1000 hours	
13. Light and Visibility	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	
14. Terrain	Hills, dense forest	Hills, dense forest	GS GS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Considering density of woods, probably < 25 yards	GS GS 4414
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Unknown; assume 1 bazooka round	
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Moving in column down forest trail	---	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	None	Cavanagh, p. 59-61

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Size of German attack probably unknown at the time	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cavanagh, p. 59-61
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Three others on the trail behind this one were available for moving overwatch fire	---	Cavanagh, p. 59-61; Cole, p. 88-89
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. Probably about 600 rounds for 7.92mm MG	Probably one bazooka round	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 202

ACTION 10: LAST STAND OF THE 1/23d
1500 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Line of foxholes straddling the Schwarzenbruch Trail occupied by infantry of 1st Plt, I Co, 3/23d Inf Regt	Cavanagh, p. 38-39; Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); MacDonald, p. 375
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	1st Plt, I Co, 3/23d Inf (approx. 50 men)	Cavanagh, p. 38-39; Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); MacDonald, p. 375
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	II Bn, 25th SS-PzGren Regt, 12th SS-PzD (approx. 350-500 men)	---	Cavanagh, p. 64
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cavanagh, p. 61-62
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Unknown number (approx. 20) PzJg IV/48 Jagd-panzers of 12th SS-PzJg Bn, 12th SS-PzD	---	Cavanagh, p. 61-62; Pallud, p. 92

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
7. Infantry Casualties	Heavy	Heavy	
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	Weak artillery support - only three rounds per salvo	MacDonald, p. 378
10. Obstacles	Vehicles forced to stay on trails because of dense woods	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Overcast, frozen ground with snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)
12. Time of Day	1500 hours	1500 hours	
13. Light and Visibility	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	Daylight; visibility reduced by forest	
14. Terrain	Hills, dense forest	Hills, dense forest	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	Considering density of woods probably < 25 yards	Considering density of woods, probably < 25 yards	GSGS 4414
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown; bazooka operator probably killed by MG or small arms fire	Two bazooka rounds fired at lead Jagdpanzer; both missed	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Moving in column down forest trail	---	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cavanagh, p. 59-61; MacDonald, p. 378
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; some foxholes with overhead cover, but not enough for the entire platoon. Trees provided some cover	MacDonald, p. 375
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders had heard sounds of battle ahead of them all morning and elements of 3/393d fleeing German attack had just passed through their lines	MacDonald, p. 377
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	Sporadic weak US artillery support-three rounds per salvo due to ammunition shortage	MacDonald, p. 378
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Unknown. At least several would have been available for this task	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. About 600 rounds for 7.92mm MG	Three bazooka rounds	Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); Cavanagh, p. 61-62

ACTIONS 11-19

Name: Death of a Battalion

Location: Lausdell Crossroads, Belgium

Time: 1730-2400 hours, 17 December 1944

By nightfall on 16 December, the 2d ID's General Walter Robertson had accumulated enough information to fully appreciate the gravity of the German attacks in the 99th ID sector. Two of the 2d ID's three regiments were clustered that night around the little crossroads village of Wahlerscheid, and their only connection with the rest of V Corps was a narrow forest road that led to Rocherath, some seven kilometers to the south. If the German forces attacking west down the Schwarzenbruch and Weisserstein Trails were able to cut this road before Robertson could withdraw those two regiments, the 9th and 38th, then those regiments faced the likelihood of being cut off and the possibility of being destroyed. To prevent this, Robertson and his staff quickly worked out a plan for the disengagement from Wahlerscheid and withdrawal back to Krinkelt-Rocherath. Robertson called the V Corps commander, Gen Leonard Gerow, and requested permission to withdraw. Gerow bucked the question up the chain of command to the 1st Army commander, Gen Courtney Hodges, who gave permission for Robertson to halt the Wahlerscheid attack but not to withdraw. By 0730 the next morning, after repeated requests from Gerow, Hodges still would not authorize the withdrawal of the 2d ID, but told Gerow he could "act as he saw fit."⁵⁰

By this time, the 2d ID had been in near-continuous action at Wahlerscheid for 96 hours and had already lost 1,200 men. The 1/9th, from a starting strength of 35 officers and 678 men on 13 December, was down to 22 officers and 387 men. Worse, A Co had lost two company commanders, B and C Cos had each lost one, and numerous platoon leaders and platoon sergeants had also become casualties.⁵¹ These losses made the order to withdraw from the hard-won crossroads, which the 1/9th received at 0955 on the morning of the

⁵⁰ Cole, The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge, p.104

⁵¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "German Breakthrough", File #176

17th, all the more bitter for the men of that battalion, and Wahlerscheid became known to them as "Heartbreak Crossroads." According to Robertson's plan, the 1/9th was to be the last battalion from that regiment to withdraw from the Wahlerscheid area, moving out on the heels of the 3/9th. The 3/9th began its withdrawal about 1200 hours. K Co, the last company in the column, was late getting started and as a result was several hundred yards behind the rest of the battalion. When K Co reached the Rocherather Baracken crossroads, about a kilometer north of Rocherath, at 1230, it was met by General Robertson, who ordered the company commander to move his unit as quickly as possible to the Lausdell crossroads, "a complex of roads and farm trails near an isolated farmhouse, just over half way between the woodsline to the east and Rocherath."⁵² Once there, K Co was to dig in and await the arrival of the next battalion, to whom K Co would then be attached. As K Co turned east to comply with this order, Robertson intercepted the 3/9th's Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon and 1st Plt of M Co, a heavy machine gun platoon, and gave them the same mission.⁵³

Farther north, the 1/9th started its march to the twin villages, first regrouping in the low ground 1200 yards south of Wahlerscheid at about 1500, then proceeding south on the forest road at about 1530. One platoon of A Co was sent into the woods to the east as flank protection, while a small rearguard force of one platoon each from B and C Cos covered the rear.⁵⁴ The column reached the Rocherather Baracken at 1600, where they, too, encountered Gen Robertson. He loaded as many of the men as would fit onto two trucks he had commandeered and sent them off to join the 3/9th at the Lausdell Crossroads. Gen Robertson and the 1/9th battalion commander, LtCol William D. McKinley,⁵⁵ followed the trucks in Robertson's jeep after ordering the battalion executive officer, Maj William F. Hancock, to follow on foot with the rest of the 1/9th. Hancock had authorization from Robertson to commandeer

⁵² MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets, p.380

⁵³ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Grand-nephew of President William McKinley

any vehicles that passed him heading west and move the troops to Lausdell on them.

Robertson was well aware by this time that the 3/23d in the woods at the Ruppenvenn was fighting for its life against the German attack, and he was determined to construct a new defense line at Lausdell before the Germans could break out of the forest. To this end he authorized McKinley to take command of any troops he could lay his hands on to strengthen his force, warning him that large numbers of 2d and 99th Division men would probably be straggling out of the woods into his position in front of the German advance.⁵⁶ For artillery support, Robertson said, McKinley could call on his usual supporting battalion, the 15th FA Bn, as well as the 924th FA Bn, which had been supporting the Wahlerscheid attack from positions just northeast of the Rocherather Baracken.⁵⁷

By 1700, as the sun was setting, the 1/9th had reached the Lausdell area and was "deployed on a slight rise overlooking a shallow depression from which a gradual ascent led into the forest."⁵⁸ A heavy fog clung to the ground, which was covered by a layer of snow. Visibility was limited to about 100 yards. As McKinley's men took up their positions, they could see that Gen Robertson's assessment of the situation had been correct. "Stragglers [from the 3/23d and 3/393d] with and without arms [hurried] along the roads and across the fields,"⁵⁹ retreating before the German advance. Sounds of heavy fighting emanated from the dark forest. K Co of the 3/9th, which arrived a few minutes before the 1/9th, dug in north of the Ruppenvenn-Rocherather Baracken road and was supported in that position by three self-propelled tank destroyers of the 644th TD Bn. C Co, whose effective numbered less than 50 men,⁶⁰ arrived and established positions to the left of K Co north of the

⁵⁶ Cavanagh, Krinkelt-Rocherath: The Battle for the Twin Villages, pp.74-77

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Cole, op cit, p.109

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "German Breakthrough", File #176

road, while B Co dug in astride the road itself. A Co assumed positions south of the road to B Co's right (*Figure 12*). Like the 3/23d had done when it was rushed into defensive positions the previous day, the 1/9th had left its AT mines behind in the interests of saving time, but fortunately for them the TDs of the 644th TD Bn had some mines with them, which McKinley's men hurriedly fashioned into five daisy chains of six mines each.⁶¹ The battalion's ammunition vehicles arrived before long, carrying 15 extra bazookas, which were passed out to specially trained teams of bazooka men.⁶² M Co's machine gun platoon placed its heavy machine guns on the high ground covering the road to the southeast in order to interdict any German infantry advance from that direction. A platoon of four towed 3-inch tank destroyers, the 3d Plt of the 801st TD Bn's B Co,⁶³ also guarded the area. All told there were about 600 men in McKinley's battalion and its attachments.⁶⁴

About this time, the retreat of the 3/23d from the Ruppenvenn area caused Gen Lauer of the 99th ID to order the battered 3/393d Inf back into action to help halt the German advance. The battalion commander, Col Allen, sent a four-man patrol south to reconnoiter, and they contacted the C Co, 1/9th units at Lausdell. Before long the 3/393d had tied in securely on the 1/9th's left flank.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, inside the Krinkelter Wald, the jagdpanzers and panzergrenadiers of KG Müller had rooted out the last organized resistance of the 3/23d Inf and were preparing to continue driving toward Rocherath and Krinkelt. They had suffered heavy casualties in the forest battle. According to the commander of the II/25th SS-PzGren Regt, SS-LtCol Schulze-Kossens, "in the first hours all the company commanders had been killed or wounded, as well

⁶¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁶² According to the USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173, McKinley had organized 5 teams of riflemen specially trained in bazooka operation in each company when he realized that the terrain around Uhlerscheid was unsuitable for the employment of the 57mm AT gun in the attack. As a result, there were a total of 22 bazooka teams in the 1/9th at Lausdell.

⁶³ 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #209

⁶⁴ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁶⁵ USA ETO 99th ID Combat Interview, "99th ID, Ardennes, 16-20 Dec 1944", File #182

as the battalion adjutant, SS-2Lt Buchmann, and all the technical officers. Sergeants were commanding companies..."⁶⁶ As darkness fell and the rest of KG Müller regrouped, the commander of the 12th SS-PzJg Bn, SS-Capt Brockenschmidt, ordered his 1st Kompanie under SS-1Lt Helmut Zeiner⁶⁷ and an attached escort of a panzergrenadier company out of reserve and gave them the objective of spearheading the assault on Rocherath. At about 1930, as total darkness set in, this force moved off down the Schwarzenbruch Trail, the jagdpanzers moving slowly so the panzergrenadiers on foot could keep up. In the darkness, fog, and blowing snow, the force was split; the leading four vehicles and a platoon of the infantry (hereafter referred to as KG Zeiner) became separated from the rest of the company as those rear elements made a wrong turn at one of the trail intersections. KG Zeiner continued on the correct road to Rocherath, passing right through the lines of B Co, 1/9th Inf, without being challenged. "As friendly tanks and infantry were known to be coming, nobody felt it necessary to check whether they might be German."⁶⁸ Upon reaching the outskirts of Rocherath, Zeiner stopped his vehicles and sent infantry scouts ahead to see whether the village was occupied. He was unaware that he had passed right through more than a battalion of US infantry.

By 1830 the 1/9th's artillery liaison officer, Lt John C. Granville, had just managed to repair a recalcitrant SCR-610 radio set and reestablished contact with the outside world. Just then, B Co called the 1/9th battalion command post to report the sound of more tanks approaching from the east. It was the remainder of Zeiner's 1st PzJg Kompanie and their panzergrenadier escort, who had advanced down the northern trail parallel to the Schwarzenbruch Trail after getting lost. This time the B Co men made an effort to identify the vehicles, but by the time they had done so the first three jagdpanzers and a number of grenadiers had passed through their position, moved about 400 yards closer to Rocherath, and then pulled off the

⁶⁶ Moyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", p.421, File #198

⁶⁷ A mistranslation has led Zeiner to be referred to in some sources as a LtCol, but his actual rank was Operativführer (SS-1Lt), not Operativbannführer (SS-LtCol).

⁶⁸ Pallud, op cit, pp.93-94. Other accounts, notably MacDonald (p.380) and Thompson, say that they were recognized as German, but that it would have been suicide to engage them and that McKinley ordered B Co to let them pass. This would be inconsistent with the 1/9th's performance against even greater odds later in the evening. After all, the 1/9th was at Laundell to prevent just such a penetration.

road where the vehicles stopped their engines. Perhaps their commander, like Zeiner, was sending forward infantry to assess the situation. The Americans, however, hesitated no longer. Lt Granville at the battalion CP called down artillery fire from the 15th FA Bn on the three jagdpanzers; the A Co commander, Lt Stephen A. Truppner, adjusted this fire, and one of the vehicles was hit and set aflame. [Action 11] Lt Roy E. Allen and Sgt Ted Bickerstaff, both of B Co, pulled the daisy chains across the road while the following jagdpanzers were still about 400 yards away, and two of the vehicles ran over them; their tracks were knocked off and they were immobilized. [Action 12] Some of McKinley's bazooka teams tried to sneak close enough to finish off the vehicles, but the light from the burning jagdpanzer on the other side of the US line made this impossible. Other jagdpanzers, following behind that unlucky pair, veered off the road in an attempt to continue cross-country; bazooka teams knocked out two of them but the others proceeded to fan out across the fields, perhaps to provide flank support for the rest of the attack. The American artillery which was falling was also causing casualties among the German infantry, as they were caught out in the open when the barrage began. Either the American artillery or German tanks set fire to the Palm farm, which occupied the center of the battle area and were some of the only buildings in the vicinity.

At about 1840, A Co spotted a column of seven tanks or jagdpanzers accompanied by infantry approaching its position. Lt Granville adjusted artillery fire on this column, which knocked out four of the seven vehicles and killed an undetermined number of German infantry. [Action 13] The remaining three tanks churned through the A Co line, bereft of infantry support, and entered Rocherath before any other weapons could be brought to bear on them.⁸⁸

Simultaneously, the B Co commander, Lt John Melesnick, reported a disturbing development to Maj Hancock at the battalion CP. He had spotted another column of German armor and infantry approaching his position. This column, however, appeared to be almost 1000 yards long, stretching all the way

⁸⁸ Cavanaugh, op.cit., p.85

back into the forest. Lt Granville brought artillery fire down onto this column as well. The first salvos impacted right in front of B Co, and Granville walked the rounds steadily back, working over the column for at least 10 minutes while B Co raked the column with machine gun fire. "For minutes after this engagement, the night was filled with the screams of wounded SS men."⁷⁰

Despite their heavy losses, German tanks and jagdpanzers were still infiltrating through and around McKinley's position. The Americans tried desperately to cope with the vehicles that had penetrated the line, but their numbers had been greatly reduced by the size and ferocity of the German attack. At about 2215, Lt Melesnick of B Co personally destroyed one German tank with a bazooka.⁷¹ [Action 14] Lt Granville told the supporting artillery battalions to maintain their barrages on the road from the Ruppenvenn until he told them to stop. US riflemen picked off any of the tank crew members who emerged from their hatches; nevertheless, a number of panzers were within 50 yards of some of the company CPs.⁷²

One of these panzers was hit in the track and disabled by an American bazooka round. Lt Melesnick and several other bazooka teams fired at it in order to finish it off, but its armor shrugged off four of their rockets. The tank was proving to be a nuisance to the defenders, since it was still firing its machine guns and cannon at the US foxholes (one of its machine gun bursts wounded Lt Melesnick in the leg), so Cpl Charles Roberts of D Co and Sgt Otis Bone of B Co teamed up to neutralize it. They filled a five-gallon jerry can with gasoline drained from a nearby abandoned American half-track, doused the panzer with the gasoline after approaching it from a blind side, and lit it afire with a thermite grenade.⁷³ [Action 15]

⁷⁰ Cavanagh, op cit, p.85; MacDonald, op cit, p.382-383

⁷¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173; Cole, op cit, p.110; Cavanagh, op cit, p.86; Thompson, Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt (Belgium), 17-19 Dec 44, File #131; MacDonald, op cit, pp.382-383

Around 2230 the Germans doubled their efforts to break through McKinley's thin line. Assembling around the Ruppenvenn, they launched simultaneous tank-infantry assaults down all three trails leading from the forest. Lt Granville, who was having trouble getting artillery requests through on his radio because the Germans were using the same frequency, finally contacted his battalions and requested the heaviest possible fire on all three routes. Struggling to be heard over the din of battle as the Germans approached, he shouted into his radio, "If you don't get it [artillery] out right now, it will be too goddamn late!" Just then his communications were broken, perhaps by a German transmission, and he never received acknowledgement of his request. Assuming the worst, that his request had not been heard, Granville "reached out for God to take him by the hand," but three minutes later an astonishingly heavy artillery concentration blanketed all three German advance routes and their attack all but disintegrated under it. Unknown to Granville at the time, Gen Robertson considered McKinley's defense of Lausdell so crucial that he had committed all the artillery under his control, except for any that was engaged in an emergency mission, to support the 1/9th before all others. As a result, at least seven battalions of artillery answered Granville's call, including all four of the 2d ID's organic battalions and three 155mm howitzer battalions of V Corps.⁷⁴

The American artillery deluge afforded the ragged defenders of Lausdell some breathing space. They took advantage of this opportunity to evacuate their casualties, replenish their ammunition, and lay a telephone wire from McKinley's command post dugout to Col Francis Boos' 1/38th Inf CP in Rocherath. McKinley's 1/9th was now attached to the 1/38th, and Col Boos' first communication was to emphasize to McKinley the importance of his Lausdell position. Boos also promised McKinley that his men would be permitted to withdraw the next day.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173; MacDonald, op cit, p.383; Cavanagh, op cit, p.86

⁷⁵ Cavanagh, op cit, p.99

By 2315 the German attack had run out of steam under the relentless American artillery fire, and McKinley's force, though badly mauled, "had not yielded an inch of ground." Only the four jagdpanzers of KG Zeiner had been able to get all the way into Rocherath,⁷⁶ and the Germans seemed resigned to waiting until daylight to resume the attack. Both sides sat back to lick their wounds and prepare for the renewed fighting that every man knew would come with first light.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, a silence that Maj Hancock described as "almost frightening" descended over the battlefield.

* * *

In the early morning hours before dawn on 18 December, Col Boos informed Col McKinley that he would be able to withdraw as soon as Col Jack Norris' 2/38th Inf was firmly dug in behind him.⁷⁸ This event was greatly anticipated by the 1/9th, which hoped to be able to leave the crossroads without a repeat of the previous night's carnage, but that was not to be. At 0645, at the first lightening of the winter sky, the Germans renewed their attack with a sudden fury. During the night, about a company of tanks from I Pz Bn of the 12th SS-Pz Regt⁷⁹ had apparently crept to within direct fire distance of the US foxhole line, and these vehicles now fired their cannon and machine guns to cover the advance of more panzers and a battalion of infantry from the woods. These tanks of this force were from the 1st and 3d Kompanies of the I Pz Bn (Mk V Panthers), followed by 5th and 6th Kompanies (Mk IVs); the infantry were the II/25th SS-Pz Gren Regt, which had assembled in the draw just east of Lausdell; to their left, the I/25 attacked directly east of Krinkelt.⁸⁰ The visibility was very poor, for the weather was hazy and drizzly, "German weather" which forced the GIs to wait until the enemy was

⁷⁶ According to Meyer, "parts of the battalion [II/25th SS-Pz Gren Regt] and a few panzerjägers [of the 12th SS-Pz Jg Bn] had temporarily broken into the village, but had not been able to hold there." (p.425)

⁷⁷ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173; Cavanagh, op cit, p.86

⁷⁸ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁷⁹ Meyer, op cit, p.430

⁸⁰ ibid.

very close before firing, but they engaged the Germans with every weapon at their disposal, including artillery, which the GIs called down virtually on top of their own positions at times.⁸¹ Private William K. Soderman of K Co "began his own private war"⁸² by leaping into a roadside ditch with a bazooka and knocking out the lead panzer in full view of the enemy. This blocked the trail and forced the vehicles following to withdraw. Returning to K Co, Soderman ran across a platoon of panzergrenadiers in the fog and opened up on them with his rifle, killing at least three and forcing the rest to flee. [Action 16]

The tanks and jagdpanzers which had been knocked out on the trails that morning and the night before compelled most of the vehicles in this attack to drive across the fields. Five panzers thus approached the A&P Platoon position, passing the hulks of two tanks destroyed in the night attack. They fired point-blank into the American foxholes as they passed through, and although two were knocked out by bazookas, the other three proceeded into Rocherath.⁸³ [Action 17]

By 0800 the panzers and grenadiers had completely overrun the 1/9th's front line companies south of the main road, but still the Americans clung tenaciously to the crossroads. The tanks fired their cannon directly into the foxholes, and if the GIs tried to run they were mown down by the tanks' machine guns. One soldier was seen trying to immobilize a panzer by jamming his rifle between the cleats of its track. When about half a dozen men on B Co's right flank ran out of bazooka ammunition and headed for the rear, Col McKinley stepped out of his dugout CP, stopped them, and sent them back to their platoon. All along the line, the GIs and grenadiers were engaged in fierce hand-to-hand fighting.⁸⁴

⁸¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough", #176; Cole, op cit, pp.115-116

⁸² Cavanagh, op cit, p.109

⁸³ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁸⁴ Ibid.; Cavanagh, op cit, p.109

The dense fog over the crossroads lifted at about 0830, allowing Lt Stephen Truppner, the A Co commander, to register artillery fire on the Germans that had overrun his company. An entire US artillery battalion dropped its shells on the A Co area for 30 minutes; the German attack was stopped, but only a dozen men from A Co survived. Truppner was not one of them. K Co of the 3/9th was likewise swamped:

"From his CP in the basement of the Palm family farmhouse, Capt Garvey, the K Co commander, could see Germans prodding those few of his men that were still alive from their foxholes, while a German tank approached the house and halted with its cannon only a few feet from the front door. Aware that it would be a matter of seconds before the tank blasted the house to pieces, Garvey told a man who spoke German to call out that his company commander would surrender to a German officer. When a German lieutenant arrived, Garvey and his command post group filed out with their hands above their heads."⁸⁵

Of K Company's entire complement, only one officer and 10 enlisted men escaped.⁸⁶ Yet still McKinley's line held, for Col Boos had radioed him and said it would be another hour or more before the 2/38th was in position at Rocherath's edge. The 1/9th held because it had to hold.

With A and K Companies effectively gone, the momentum of their attack carried some of the German tanks and infantry into Rocherath itself, but the remnants of B and C Companies, as well as the 3/9th's A&P Platoon, still manned their positions. To the north, the German attack had also hit the 3/393d, which had lost half its men and all its machine guns, mortars, and AT guns in the forest battle on 16 and 17 December. Although a bazooka team hit one of the German tanks in this sector, the round failed to penetrate and Col Allen's men fell back another 1000 yards.

By 0900, the firing at Lausdell was beginning to die away, since much of the German force had now passed south of the remaining 1/9th platoons and into Rocherath, and since there weren't that many Americans left to fire their weapons. There were still considerable forces engaging McKinley's line, however. Around 1000 a second wave of seven German tanks and infantry smashed

⁸⁵ MacDonald, op cit, p.396

⁸⁶ Cole, op cit, p.116

into the American line, hitting mostly around the 3/9th's A&P Platoon position. Several US tanks had just come into the area; one of these fired six shots at the oncoming panzers, all of which missed. The Shermans quickly retired. American artillery then fell on the panzers, one of which exploded.⁸⁷ [Action 18] The other six tanks swept on into Rocherath while the grenadiers stayed behind to mop up the A&P Platoon and nearby survivors of K Co. "The result was a terrific small arms battle,"⁸⁸ during which Pvt Soderman of K Co continued his "private war" against the Germans. As some other panzers approached the remnants of his company, Soderman staged a repeat performance of his action earlier that morning by disabling the lead panzer with one shot from his bazooka. As he ran for cover after firing the weapon, however, one of the tanks fired a burst of machine gun fire which tore into his right shoulder. Soderman fell, severely wounded, but managed to drag himself back into the ditch, where he was protected from further fire.⁸⁹ [Action 19]

About the same time, Col Boos called Col McKinley and told him that he could withdraw his battalion from the crossroads beginning at 1300, since the 2/38th should be fully in position behind the 1/9th by then. This was welcome news to McKinley, but it came almost too late as he did not have much of a command left by then. As more German tanks and infantry poured into the Lausdell area from the woods, Lt Granville called for emergency artillery on the area "and it seemed that all the artillery in the 1st Army responded to the call."⁹⁰ The shells continued to fall for about 30 minutes, allowing the 1/9th and its attachments to fend off the remainder of the German advances. McKinley told Col Boos that he could not hold out any longer, however, but that he also could not withdraw without being annihilated because his troops were too closely engaged and because German tanks were blocking his withdrawal route. McKinley said he needed a counterattack by tanks or self-propelled Tds

⁸⁷ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173. Lt Knutsen, the A&P Plt leader, thought an artillery round may have entered this panzer's open top hatch and detonated.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Cavanagh, op cit, p.110

⁹⁰ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

to cover his withdrawal. No sooner had he said this than Lt Eugene Hinski, the 1/9th's AT Platoon leader, spotted four Shermans of A Co, 741st Tk Bn moving north out of Rocherath on the road to the Rocherather Baracken. Moving quickly to intercept them, Lt Hinski asked the tank platoon commander, Lt Gaetano Barcellona, if he and his men wanted to fight. "Hell, yes!" said Barcellona, so Hinski led the tanks to the 1/9th CP. There, McKinley explained the situation and told Barcellona that the greatest difficulty facing the 1/9th was four German tanks located between the Palm farmhouse and Rocherath, interdicting the battalion's withdrawal route. To counter this, Barcellona split his command into two pairs; one pair, including Barcellona's own tank, stayed behind cover from where they could shoot at the panzers, while the other two moved out into the open to lure the panzers into leaving their cover in hopes of an easy kill. The plan worked brilliantly. At 1115, US artillery began firing to cover the withdrawal, and the two decoy Shermans moved out. The panzers followed. Barcellona knocked out the first panzer with one shot, and three more rounds finished off the second/ Discerning the trap too late, the remaining two panzers turned to flee into Rocherath but one of the other Shermans hit one in the rear, disabling it. The fourth panzer made it into the comparative safety of the village.⁹¹

With the armored threat disposed of, Barcellona's tanks turned back east to cover McKinley's withdrawal, two Shermans on each flank of the position. Their machine gun fire kept the Germans' heads down while the GIs pulled back. "Col McKinley stood at the roadside, grasping the hands of his men as they passed and thanking them for what they had done to the Germans...Col McKinley himself was the last to leave the area. As he and his operations officer, Capt James Harvey, left their command post, they could hear the shouts of 'Hande hoch!' coming from the Germans behind the hedgerows."⁹²

In the words of Charles MacDonald, who was present at this battle,

⁹¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat interview, "German Breakthrough", file #176; 741st Tk Bn AAR, Dec 1944, File #210; Thompson, op cit, File #131; MacDonald, op cit, pp. 396-397; Cavanagh, op cit, pp.110-111

⁹² MacDonald, op cit, pp.397-398; Cavanagh, op cit, pp.110-111

"McKinley and the men of the 1/9th and K Co, 3/9th, had performed an incredible feat. By their stand, they had enabled two of the battalions of the 38th Infantry to reach the twin villages for a defense that otherwise probably could not have been mounted. ('You have saved my regiment,' Boos told McKinley.) They had left the ground around the cluster of roads and trails and the farmhouse littered with German dead and the carcasses of 17 tanks and tank destroyers. For all the pertinacity and valor displayed by a number of other battalions of the 2d Infantry Division during the fight for the twin villages, none performed with more fortitude and sacrifice than the men of McKinley's battalion and K Co. And for the all the defenses of many another American unit during the German counteroffensive, probably none exceeded and few equalled McKinley's battalion and K Co in valor and sacrifice."⁹³

The 1/9th passed through the 2/38th and headed west to the high ground just northwest of the Rocherath Baracken. There McKinley was able to see for the first time the true extent of his losses. A Co had 12 men left;⁹⁴ B Co had 27; C Co had just over 40; D Co, the heavy weapons company, still had 60 men left; while K Co of the 3/9th had 11 or 12 men, depending on the source. The 3/9th's A&P Platoon also had only 12 men left. Later in the day, when the battalion assembled in Rocherath, only 20 officers and 197 men were present of the 600 that had arrived at the crossroads less than 24 hours before.⁹⁵ There were only enough combat effective left in the battalion to form six rifle squads.⁹⁶ The cost of holding the Lausdell crossroads had indeed been high, but the cost of failure would have been much higher.

⁹³ MacDonald, op cit, p.398

⁹⁴ Some accounts say only five men were left, but seven men came back that night after hiding in the Lausdell area and seeing a long column of American prisoners being marched to the German rear.

⁹⁵ 9th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944, NARA 302-(INF)09-0.3

⁹⁶ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

ACTION 11: FIRST BLOOD AT LAUSDELL
1830 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One battalion; with attachments, about 600 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 900-1500 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Four (not used) b. Three (not used) c. None d. Twenty-two (not used)	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Approx. 16 PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzers of 12th SS-PzJg Bn (-1 Kp)	---	Meyer, p.198
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	Heavy	Heavy	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One PzJg IV/48 set on fire by artillery round	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	15th FA Bn fired on German column, destroying one jagdpanzer	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight of Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	1830 hours	1830 hours	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A - artillery fire	N/A - artillery fire	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Direct approach along road in column	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; defenders had arrived and dug in about two hours prior to the attack. Some foxholes, no overhead cover, some AT mines	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise-sounds of fighting had been heard coming from forest and Germans could be seen crossing open ground between woods and crossroads	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	US artillery knocked out one jagdpanzer and killed or wounded numerous grenadiers	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	No overwatch possible versus artillery	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. probably 600 rounds for 7.92 MG	Unknown	von Senger und Etterlin, p. 199

ACTION 12: THE DAISY CHAIN
1830 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One battalion; with attachments, about 600 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 900-1500 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Four (not used) b. Three (not used) c. None d. Twenty-two (not used)	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209);
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Approx. 15 PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzers of 12th SS-PzJg Bn (-1 Kp)	---	Meyer, p.198
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Two PzJg IV Jagdpanzers immobilized by running over AT mine daisy chains on road	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	15th FA Bn firing defensive fire in support of US positions	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	AT mine daisy chains on road	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	1830	1830	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GS6S 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A - mines	0 yards	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	At least two AT mines detonated	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Direct approach along road in column	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; defenders had arrived and dug in about two hours prior to the attack. Some foxholes, no overhead cover, some AT mines	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise-sounds of fighting had been heard coming from forest and Germans could be seen crossing open ground between woods and crossroads	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	No overwatch possible versus mines	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. Probably 600 rounds for 7.92 MG	Unknown	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199; Cavanagh, p.80-81; MacDonald, p.381; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

ACTION 13: FOUR DOWN
1840 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One battalion; with attachments, about 600 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 900-1500 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Four (not used) b. Three (not used) c. None d. Twenty-two (not used)	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209);
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Seven PzJg IV/48 Jagd-panzers of 12th SS-PzJg Bn (-1 Kp)	---	Meyer, p.198
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	Heavy	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Four out of seven PzJg IV Jagdpanzers knocked out by US artillery fire	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	15th FA Bn and 924th FA Bn fired on German column, knocking out four PzJg IV Jagdpanzers	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	1840	1840	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Murky darkness; visibility poor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GS GS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A - artillery fire	N/A - artillery fire	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Direct approach in column along road	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; defenders had arrived and dug in about two hours prior to the attack. Some foxholes, no overhead cover, some AT mines	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise-sounds of fighting had been heard coming from forest and Germans could be seen crossing open ground between woods and crossroads	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	US artillery knocked out four of seven Jagd-panzers and killed or wounded an undetermined but large number of enemy infantrymen.	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	No overwatch possible versus artillery	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV main gun. Probably 600 rounds for 7.92 MG	Unknown	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199;

ACTION 14: LT. MELESNICK GETS A PANZER
2215 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	B Co, 1/9th Inf; probably about 100 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 900-1500 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Four (not used) b. Three (not used) c. None d. At least one	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209);
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Unknown, but at least four companies of Jagd-panzers were involved, plus probably some tanks of I Pz Bn	---	Meyer, p.198; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One German tank or jagd-panzer knocked out by bazooka fire	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	US artillery was trying to interdict German approach routes with artillery at the time	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
12. Time of Day	2215	2215	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Night; visibility poor	Night; visibility poor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A	Unknown, but due to the nature of the bazooka, probably less than 100 yards	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown, but probably one bazooka round	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Unknown	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; defenders had arrived and dug in about two hours prior to the attack. Some foxholes, no overhead cover, some AT mines	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; battle had been ongoing for several hours	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	US artillery was attempting to interdict German approach routes, with occasional hits on German armor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Unknown	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Depends on vehicle type	Probably one bazooka round	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

ACTION 15: JERRY CAN VERSUS PANZER
2200 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One depleted battalion; with attachments, probably about 500 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-Pz Gren Regt, probably about 700-1200 men	---	Meyer, p. 198; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. At least three	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176); 801st TD Bn AAR, Dec 44 (File #209);

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One German tank or Jagd-panzer	---	Meyer, p.198; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	Lt Melesnick wounded in leg by MG fire	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One immobilized German tank or jagdpanzer, after deflecting four bazooka rounds, doused with gasoline and set alight by a thermite grenade	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
10. Obstacles	None - immobilized	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Cold, overcast. Ground frozen with some snow cover	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131)
12. Time of Day	2200	2200	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Night; visibility poor	Night; visibility poor	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GS GS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A	Given the nature of the weapons, assume <100 yards for bazookas, <5 yards for gasoline	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown	Four bazooka rounds, one thermite grenades	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	None - immobilized	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty; defenders had arrived and dug in several hours prior to the attack. Some foxholes, no overhead cover, some AT mines	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; battle had been raging for several hours	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None recorded	---	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Depends on vehicle type	Assume no more than 5-6 rounds per bazooka; five gallon can of gasoline; unknown number of thermite grenades, but at least one	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

ACTION 16: THE PRIVATE WAR OF WILLIAM SODERMAN, Part 1
0645 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One depleted battalion; with attachments, probably about 400 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 500-900 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	Cavanagh, p.110
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Several Mk V Panthers of 1st and 3d Kompanies, I Oz Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	Meyer, p.198;
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cavanagh, p.110
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	Cavanagh, p.110

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One Mk V Panther knocked out by bazooka shot to the flank at close range, blocking the road	---	Cavanagh, p.110
9. Artillery	None	Several battalions of US artillery firing defensive fire	Cavanagh, p.110
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Thawing; hazy and drizzly	Thawing; hazy and drizzly	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
12. Time of Day	0645	0645	Cavanagh, p.110
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; dense fog. Visibility poor	Dawn; dense fog. Visibility poor	Cavanagh, p.110
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GS GS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A	Given the nature of the weapons and the fact that it was fired from a roadside ditch at a vehicle on the road, probably less than 10 yards	Cavanagh, p.110

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Probably one bazooka round	Cavanagh, p.110
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Moving in column along road toward US position	---	Cavanagh, p.110
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	None	Cavanagh, p.110
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; battle had been raging for several hours	Cavanagh, p.110
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	Some US artillery was falling in the area, but it had no effect on this action	Cavanagh, p.110; MacDonald, p.396
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Several were available for moving overwatch	---	Cavanagh, p.110
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	79-82 rounds for Mk V main gun; 4200 rounds for MG	Probably one bazooka round	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199

**ACTION 17: THE A&P PLATOON GETS TWO
0645 Hours, 18 December 1944**

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One depleted battalion; with attachments, probably about 400 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	I and II Bns of 25th SS-Pz Gren Regt, probably 400-800 men	---	Meyer, p. 430
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. At least several	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Four Mk IV panzers or Mk V Panthers from I Pz Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	Meyer, p. 430; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None recorded, although German tanks were firing point-blank into US foxholes	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Two panzers knocked out by bazooka fire at close range	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	Several battalions of US artillery firing defensive fire	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	None	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
11. Meteorological Data	Thawing; hazy and drizzly	Thawing; hazy and drizzly	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
12. Time of Day	0645	0645	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; dense fog. Visibility poor	Dawn; dense fog. Visibility poor	Cavanagh, p.109; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	Close range, probably less than 50 yards	Close range, probably less than 50 yards	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown; tanks probably firing HE into US foxholes	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Five panzers approaching US foxhole line across a field, probably in line abreast formation	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Hasty. Much of defended area overrun by this time	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; German force entirely visible to defenders	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Several were available for moving overwatch	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Depends on vehicle, usually 80-90 rounds for tank main gun and 3000-4000 MG rounds	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199

ACTION 18: DOWN THE HATCH
1000 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One depleted battalion; with attachments, probably about 400 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	I and II Bns of 25th SS-Pz Gren Regt, probably 400-800 men	---	Meyer, p. 430
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. Unknown	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Seven German tanks, either Mk IV panzers or Mk V Panthers from I Pz Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	Meyer, p. 430; Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
7. Infantry Casualties	None mentioned, but it is likely that there were some	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One panzer exploded by artillery round which may have entered through open turret hatch	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
9. Artillery	None	Heavy US artillery barrage by several battalions	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
10. Obstacles	Two burned-out hulks of tanks destroyed the night before	None	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
11. Meteorological Data	Thawing; drizzly, but fog has lifted	Thawing; drizzly, but fog has lifted	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131); Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
12. Time of Day	1000	1000	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
13. Light and Visibility	Cloudy day. Visibility below average	Cloudy day. Visibility below average	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A - artillery fire	N/A- artillery fire	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Seven panzers advancing, possibly line abreast cross-country or line astern on road	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Not extensive. Defenders had been in place since the previous afternoon, but the ground had been frozen and digging in deep was impossible	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; battle had been ongoing for several hours	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	US artillery destroyed one panzer but the other six swept past defensive position unscathed	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	No overwatch possible versus artillery	---	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Depends on vehicle, usually 80-90 rounds for tank main gun and 3000-4000 MG rounds	Unknown number of artillery rounds	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199

ACTION 19: THE PRIVATE WAR OF WILLIAM SODERMAN, Part 2
1000 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	1/9th Inf deployed across Lausdell crossroads to prevent German access to Rocherath	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	One depleted battalion; with attachments, probably about 400 men	Cbt Int, "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int, "German Breakthrough" (File #176)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	25th SS-PzGren Regt, probably about 500-900 men	---	Meyer, p. 198
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	Cavanagh, p.110
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	At least three German tanks or jagdpanzers	---	Cavanagh, p.110
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	Cavanagh, p.110

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	None mentioned	Bazooka operator severely wounded in shoulder by return MG fire	Cavanagh, p.110
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One tank or jagdpanzer disabled by a single bazooka shot to the flank at close range	---	Cavanagh, p.110
9. Artillery	None	None	Cavanagh, p.110
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Thawing; drizzly, but fog has lifted	Thawing; drizzly, but fog has lifted	Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt" (File #131);
12. Time of Day	1000	1000	Cavanagh, p.110
13. Light and Visibility	Cloudy day. Visibility below average	Cloudy day. Visibility below average	Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Cbt Int "German Break-through" (File #176)
14. Terrain	Open rolling	Open rolling	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	N/A	Given the nature of the weapons and the fact that it was fired from a roadside ditch at a vehicle on the road, probably less than 10 yards	Cavanagh, p.110

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	No main gun rounds; at least one burst of MG fire	Probably one bazooka round	Cavanagh, p.110
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Unknown; some type of direct frontal approach	---	Cavanagh, p.110
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	None	Cavanagh, p.110
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; battle had been raging for several hours	Cavanagh, p.110
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	Cavanagh, p.110;
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	At least one tank in the group was performing moving overwatch; it wounded the bazooka operator with MG fire after he knocked out the lead vehicle	---	Cavanagh, p.110
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	79-82 rounds for Mk V main gun; 4200 rounds for MG	One bazooka round	von Senger und Etterlin, p.199

ACTIONS 20-27

Name: Pocket of Resistance

Location: #65 Rocherath and Environs, Rocherath, Belgium

Time: 1800 17 December 1944-1830 19 December 1944

As the 99th ID defense line between Wahlerscheid and the Losheim Gap crumbled on 17 December, the American commanders hastily issued orders for the establishment of new defensive positions to halt or at least slow the German advance. Among the most vital places to defend were the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath, through which passed the only supply and communications route for the bulk of the 2d ID at Wahlerscheid. The villages were also the key to two of the routes the 12th SS-PzD needed to reach the Meuse, so they were destined to become the center of the fighting that was to rage in front of the Elsenborn Ridge.

At around 0745 on 17 December, Col Francis Boos, commander of the 38th Inf Regt, informed his AT Company commander, Capt James W. Love, that a German tank-infantry force [KG Peiper] had just captured Büllingen. Fearing that the Germans might turn north to roll up the flank of the 99th ID and cut the 2d ID in two, Col Boos ordered Love to move immediately to Krinkelt and Rocherath and organize a defense of the villages. Acting swiftly, Love sent his 1st Platoon [three 57mm AT guns] to defend the southern and western approaches to Krinkelt; the 2d Platoon [three guns] went to cover the eastern edge of the villages; and the 3d Plt [three guns] moved to the north and northeastern edge. While they were preparing to move out, the 4th Plt [Mine Platoon] under Lt George W. Stewart organized as infantry and prepared to move between the 1st and 2d Platoons. The 38th Regimental Service Company did the same and moved to provide infantry protection at a roadblock on the main road from the Ruppenvenn through the twin villages to Büllingen, a road known as the "Route vers Udenbreth."¹

¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

At 1230, Gen Robertson ordered the 2/38th Infantry to disengage from the Wahlerscheid attack and move south to the twin villages. He sent similar orders to the 1/38th about two and a half hours later. The 1/38th, commanded by Col Frank T. Mildren, moved out around 1530, its withdrawal covered by an artillery barrage by the 37th FA Bn and the 2/38th's 81mm mortars. As the battalion marched down the forest road between Wahlerscheid and Rocherath, a few kilometers away Col Tuttle's 3/23d was embroiled in the bitter and doomed defense of the Ruppenvenn, and Col McKinley's 1/9th was hurriedly digging in at the Lausdell Crossroads. When the 1/38th reached the Rocherath Baracken about 1630, the Germans began shelling them heavily with artillery and nebelwerfers. A Co, in the lead, hurried through the crossroads largely unscathed, but B Co and especially C Co were hit hard by the barrage. C Co lost 22 men, 17 of them in the 2d Platoon, but perhaps more important, the companies lost precious time in which to reach the twin villages before the Germans did.² By the time the 2d Plt, C Co, commander, 1Lt George Adams, made sure that his wounded were properly looked after, the rest of C Co had gone ahead and disappeared from sight. Setting out with the remainder of 2d Plt, a machine gun section from D Co, and part of the Headquarters Co, Adams eventually reached Rocherath and rejoined the rest of C Co, which at this point had about 70 men left. Adams' group was joined by several men from 3d Plt, who had been sent to reinforce the Service Co roadblock at the north-eastern edge of the village but had retreated when German tanks overran the roadblock.³

Around 1730, just as it was getting dark, the C Co commander, Capt Edward C. Rollings, met Lt Adams and showed him where to deploy his platoon. Adams' 2d Plt went into #65 Rocherath, near a corner overlooking one of Rocherath's main streets. This house was owned by Johann Drosch, a relative of the mayor of Rocherath, Paul Drosch. Adams sent one of his squads across

² USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173; MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, p.384; Cavanagh, Krinkelt-Rocherath: The Battle for the Twin Villages, p.87; Cole, The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge, pp.110-111

³ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173. These "tanks" were undoubtedly some of the jagdpanzers of the 12th SS-PzJg Bn who got past the 1/9th at Lausdell but who were unable to maintain their foothold in the village without infantry support. See preceding actions, "Death of a Battalion".

to the east side of the street to the home of Johann Rauw at #61.⁴ Rollings' company CP was in a house a few yards to the northwest of Adams' position. A couple of houses to the north of #65, Capt Love had established his AT Company CP. Adams and his platoon were now placed under Love's command. Their positions along this street in northeastern Rocherath would play a central role in the next two days' fighting, especially Adams' #65, which covered one of the two main German entry routes into the twin villages from the northeast.

During this time, few of the American troops moving into the Belgian houses had any idea of the military situation beyond the next street. Everyone had heard conflicting rumors that the 99th ID was routed, that it was holding fast at all costs, or that it was counterattacking. The men could hear the fighting blazing to the northeast at Lausdell, where McKinley's 1/9th was then fighting for its life, and they could see flares of all colors streaking up into the sky to the north and northeast. These flares were steadily falling closer and closer to the village.⁵

Around 1800, the Germans attacked the area around Love's AT Co CP. First they softened up the area "with the most intense concentration of mortar and artillery fire that Capt Love had so far experienced."⁶ Shortly after the barrage stopped, German tanks or jagdpanzers entered the village from the northeast, using two parallel roads. The first force, using the northern route, didn't penetrate even as far as the street Love and Adams were on before pulling back, but the southern branch of the attack pressed on down the Route vers Udenbreth to the area around the church, where the infantry riding on the decks of the vehicles dismounted and sought cover in the buildings. This southern group may have been *KG Zeiner* of the 1st SS-PzJg Bn, which was the only German force to stay in the village all night, but one source says the attack was carried out by at least 20 tanks and 500 infantry, which was

⁴ Cavanagh, op cit, pp.89-90

⁵ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

⁶ Ibid.

a far larger force than Zeiner's. During the fighting, the squad of 2d Plt in #61 was attacked by about half a squad of German infantry. Since it was now dark outside and since the Rauw house had no windows or doors on the eastern side from which to take the Germans under fire, Lt Adams ordered the squad to pull back across the street into #65, where 2d Plt consolidated its position.⁷ An excerpt from the 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 December 1944" says:

"All during this attack, in which it seems the Germans had difficulty in getting their artillery fire to lift, the enemy artillery was falling over the whole area, including where their own infantry was operating. Their method of attack seemed to be to illuminate the targets and blind the US gunners with momentary flashes from floodlights that were mounted on the tanks. The effect of the floodlights was terrifying, according to Captain Love. The blinding light, followed by the inky blackness of the night in which no one could see anything, made the battle seem as uncoordinated as if it had been fought in the Pit. The enemy seemed to depend heavily on the effect on morale of a high percentage of tracer in his ammunition, and Captain Love estimated that most of the fighting that was done that first night to be about 1/3 ball ammunition and the rest tracer."

All that afternoon and evening, stragglers from all units of the 2d and 99th Divisions had been wandering through the twin villages, looking for their outfits or headed vaguely toward "the rear." During the battle, two American half-track crews entered #65, seeking shelter from the German attack. Their half-tracks were nearby, one parked in the street just outside the house and the other across the street, next to #61, which was now held by the Germans. Adams was glad of the reinforcements, but the crews weren't inclined to contribute much to the defense of the position. Instead they spent the whole night in the cellar with five Belgian civilians who had so far passed most of the evening praying for deliverance.⁸

At 1845, about 15 minutes after the half-track crews arrived at #65, a German tank stopped at the intersection just south of Adams' house and began firing into the 1st Platoon positions, which were to the rear of Adams' 2d Plt. [See Figure 13] Leaving presumably via a door or window on the other

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

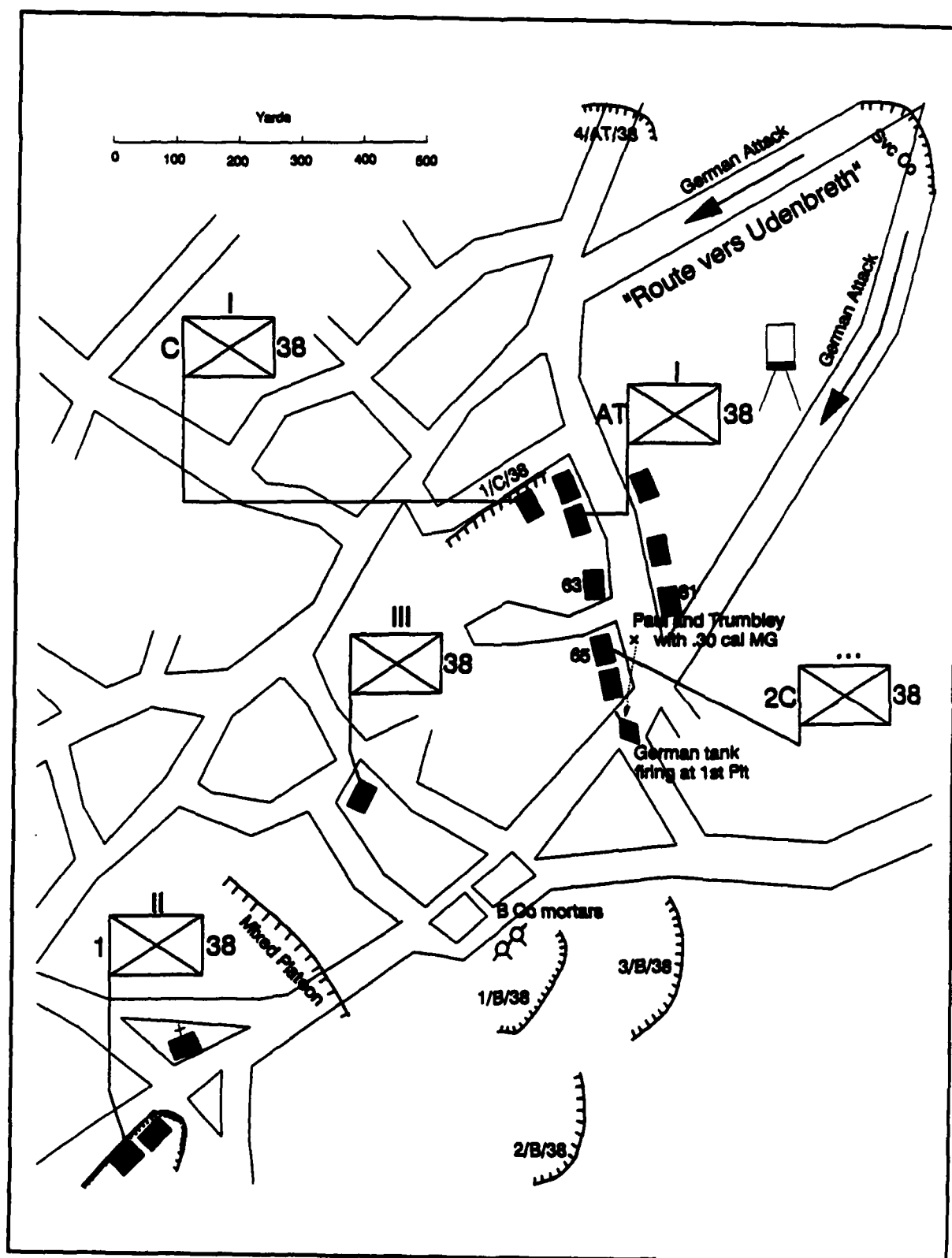


FIGURE 13. POCKET OF RESISTANCE, 17 DECEMBER

side of the house from the panzer, Adams ran to a US self-propelled TD of the 644th TD Bn that he knew was nearby. He tried to persuade the vehicle commander to move to a position from where he could take out the German tank, but the commander refused, citing a number of reasons, including that it was too dark for him to use his telescopic sights. Adams pleaded and argued with him, even offering to act as gunner himself, but to no avail. Sgt Andrew Paul, who had accompanied Adams, grew impatient with the TD commander's hesitation. He removed a .30cal machine gun mounted on a nearby jeep, draped a belt of ammunition around his neck, and stepped out into the street. He walked steadily toward the panzer, firing his machine gun from the hip at the tank as he went. After a few rounds, Paul's machine gun jammed, but Lt William Trumbley, of D Co's Machine Gun Platoon, emerged from the house, took the gun from Paul and cleared the stoppage, and then took Paul's place, spraying the panzer with the machine gun. "A German infantryman from somewhere in the vicinity fired what was thought to be a rifle grenade at Lt Trumbley, which hit the wall of the house about six feet from the lieutenant, wounding him in the right leg with a fragment. The enemy tank, unaffected by all this, fired about six more rounds at the house and moved away. At this time the American TD pulled out and was not seen again."⁹ [ACTION 20]

With the German tank gone and the battle seemingly dying down around them, Adams redeployed his men at the windows and doors of #65. About ten minutes later, one of the guards reported a column of twos marching north past the AT Co CP. Thinking that it might be a group of German infantry, Adams went outside to a Sherman tank which Capt Rollings had placed north of #65 earlier in the evening.¹⁰ Adams argued for the commander to fire on the column, but the tanker was convinced that the column was American and refused, even when Adams again offered to man the gun himself. The identity of the troops is not known for certain, but they were probably E Co of the 2/38th

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Why Adams did not try to get this Sherman to fire on the German tank earlier is unknown. Perhaps the battle situation at the time would not allow him to reach the Sherman's position.

Inf, and it is likely that the Sherman commander "Saved a friendly unit from unnecessary casualties."¹¹

The Germans regrouped and renewed their attack on the central part of Rocherath at about 2000. Grenadiers across the street from Capt Love's AT Co CP were firing rifle grenades at the house, so Love pulled most of the men out of the building and into a field a little northwest of the house, where they would be screened from the German fire until the Germans could be driven off. He left a machine gun and its crew inside the house, and they took the Germans under fire from their post at an upstairs window. About the same time, the Sherman tank, whose commander Lt Adams had spoken with earlier, drove out of its position and toward another part of the town. It is unknown whether the tank was moving forward to engage the attacking Germans or seeking safer havens farther to the rear, but shortly after its departure, two German tanks pulled up within view of Adams' platoon and began firing at #65. While their situation certainly was not a pleasant one, Adams and his men soon realized that the danger was not as great as it seemed, for the German HE shells could do no more to the house's thick stone walls than chip the outside and knock off plaster from the inside. Seeing their ineffectiveness, the panzers soon moved on to the southwest.¹²

While the battle still flared around him, at about 2030 Capt Love got a call from Col Boos informing him that the 2/38th was moving into the area to reinforce him and that the first unit to arrive, E Co, would be under his control. Capt Love dispatched a guide out to the north road to locate this company and lead them to positions Love had chosen, but the guide discovered that E Co had already arrived and was occupying positions east and a little north of Love's street, in an arc just behind the Service Co roadblock. (As mentioned above, the column that Lt Adams had wanted to fire on earlier was probably E Co, moving up to its present position.) Unable to go to E Co's position to take charge of them personally because of the fighting going on

¹¹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

¹² Ibid.

around both them and him, Love accepted their positions as a *fait accompli* and turned his attention back to supervising the defense of his own area.¹³

As the fighting continued, at around 2100 hours Col Böös dispatched K Co of the 3/38th to reinforce Love's position. En route from Krinkelt, they were attacked by a German thrust trying to penetrate into the villages from the east. Although they were able to knock out two German tanks and kill about 50 SS-panzergrenadiers, K Co was further delayed by the necessity of clearing the remnants of the attacking force from the houses in the area.¹⁴ Meanwhile, German pressure on Love's and Adams' positions increased. Sometime during this attack, the Germans overran the 9th Gun Squad of Love's 2d AT Plt, which was stationed a little farther northeast near the water tower. As German tanks rumbled down the southern road past Adams' position, his men fired AT grenades, tossed hand grenades, and even threw rocks in an attempt to stop the tanks or at least dislodge the infantry riding on them. By the time the fighting died down again around 2130, the Germans strongly held the east side of the street while AT Co and 2d Plt, C Co, still held the west side. In the battle, the Germans overran and captured a number of men from 1st Plt, B Co, which had been stationed on the eastern edge of the village, and herded them, along with prisoners from Love's 9th Gun Squad, into the basement of the Rauw house, #61.¹⁵

The Germans were now on all sides of Love and Adams, having penetrated down the streets to the north and south, occupied the houses across the street, and infiltrated behind the position and attacked American strongpoints in and around the church. When the fighting tapered off again in his area, Capt Love brought his AT Co men back into the house at #63 and posted guards around the building. He put the men on a rotating schedule so they could start to catch up on their sleep. Now that it was relatively safe to travel

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid. Also, USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "German Breakthrough", File #176; Cavanagh, *op cit*, p.98; Thompson, "Tank Fight at Rocherath-Krinkelt, Belgium, 16-19 December 1944"

¹⁵ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173; Cavanagh, *op cit*, p.96

the neighborhood as long as one avoided the Germans in the houses across the street, Love sent the AT Co Assistant Recon Officer, Lt Edward Sweeney, to effect the overdue contact and coordination with E Co of the 2/38th to the east. G Co arrived in the area about this time, with orders to tie in on AT Co's right. "The guard outside the door of the AT Co CP stopped the G Co column just in time to save them from walking down the road between the company positions and the enemy houses across the street."¹⁶

Around 2300, after all the German tanks in the area had withdrawn, the Germans in #61 across from Adams' house began shouting in German. Having received no response after about five minutes, the Germans switched to "heavily accented English," calling on the C Co men to surrender. Adams' men did not answer, but watched silently from the windows and doors of #65, from where they could not themselves be seen. Then some Germans emerged from the Rauw house, holding captured Americans in front of them at gunpoint as human shields. Adams refused the surrender demand that the men in the street shouted at him; he was unsure whether they were really captured Americans or not. After a few minutes, Germans and captives both withdrew back into the basement of #61.¹⁷

The fighting continued to decrease in intensity, so that at about 0100 Capt Love, after checking on his 3d and 4th Gun Squads, felt safe to finally turn in and get some sleep himself. For the rest of the night, the street that he and Lt Adams guarded was relatively quiet. Flames from burning houses and vehicles lit up the night sky, and the mist and light rain which kept falling at intervals during the night mixed with the heavy smoke to severely curtail visibility in the town. The Germans took advantage of the lull to gather their forces for the next morning's assault. The 989th Gren Regt of the 277th VGD finally made it through the Krinkelter Wald and assembled northeast of Rocherath, while by dawn most of the weight of the 12th SS-PzD - - the 12th SS-PzJg Bn, the 25th SS-PzGren Regt, and the panzers of the I Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt -- had gathered northeast and east of the twin villages. (The

¹⁶ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview, "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944", File #173

¹⁷ Ibid.

II Bn of the panzer regiment, composed of the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn, would not be able to finish negotiating the muddy, churned-up trails through the forest until later on the 18th.)¹⁸ On the other side, the Americans consolidated their positions in Krinkelt-Rocherath and Wirtzfeld, but still did not have a cohesive front with which to oppose the Germans. According to Cole,

"Most of the 38th Infantry was in and around the two villages, plus about a battalion and a half of the 9th Infantry and a few platoons of the 23d Infantry. Although these 2d Division troops had gaping ranks, so had their opponents. Fortunately, in view of the number of tanks already in the German camp, the American infantry had the means of antitank defense at hand: the 741st Tk Bn, 644th TD Bn, a company of the 612th TD Bn, and a few guns from the 801st TD Bn...The flanks of the 2d ID positions at the villages were more or less covered by elements of the 9th and 23d Inf in Wirtzfeld, to the southwest, and the battalions of the 393d Inf deployed in blocking positions to hold the road net north of Rocherath. As yet, however, there was no homogeneous line sealing the 2d ID front..."

* * *

Capt Love was awakened at about 0700 on the 18th, just as the sun was coming up and the fog was lifting. Some of Adams' men had heard voices coming from the house across the street, leading them to suspect that the Germans were still there and were still holding their American prisoners. Some of Adam's men, stationed in the doorway of #65, "started the battle off right" by sniping at two or three Germans "who appeared incautiously in the windows" of the Rauw house. About this time, the C Co commander, Capt Rollings, and his runner made the dash from the C Co CP to #65, safely avoiding being shot at by the Germans across the street. When he learned that Adams' squad had abandoned #61 the night before, he was angry that the house had been given up without a fight and ordered Adams to recapture and reoccupy the building.

With the rest of 2d Platoon firing covering fire from the widows and doors of the Drosch home, 2d Squad ran into the street. A wounded SS officer threw a potato-masher grenade into the street from a basement window of #61, wounding two of Adams' men, while some Germans behind the house fired two red flares into the morning sky. This may have been a signal for tank support,

¹⁸ Cole, op cit, pp.113-115

for soon German tanks could be heard approaching from the Lausdell crossroads area, but they didn't arrive in time to help the defenders of the Rauw house. Two 2d Squad men threw three hand grenades into the house and the rest of the squad stormed in, killing 11 Germans, capturing 16, and freeing six American prisoners. Among these last were Lt Ralph L. Schmidt of B Co, and S/Sgt Ron Mayer and PFC Henry Mills, machine gunners from Capt Love's 9th Gun Squad. They had been captured the previous night while manning their machine gun in a house near the Service Co roadblock. The released Americans picked up whatever abandoned weapons were lying about, scrounged some ammunition from the two half-tracks parked in the area, and then dispersed to find their units. The wounded German prisoners were taken into the Drosch home while Capt Rollings, who was wounded slightly in the leg by a ricocheting bullet while observing the fight from the door of #65, and his runner escorted the others to the rear.¹⁹

Shortly after this action, Capt Love sent a detail to the regimental ammunition depot in Krinkelt to pick up a resupply of bazooka rounds and K-rations. They returned by 0900, just as a platoon of I Co, 3/38th, arrived and took up positions in the house to the north of the AT Co CP. On their heels was a platoon of K Co, which occupied supporting positions in another house about 50 yards northwest of Love's CP.

Around 0730, a force of eleven German tanks barrelled down the southern road past the Drosch house, going so fast that none of the men in Love's CP had time to bring their weapons to bear. [See Figure 14] Just down the street, Lt Adams quickly organized two bazooka teams, using one launcher that his group had since the beginning and another that was scrounged from a jeep parked outside. These two teams fired numerous rounds at the passing panzers, scoring "many direct hits" on them but achieving no penetrations. [ACTION 21] Capt Love was surprised that these panzers could have gotten past his 5th Gun Squad, which was stationed farther northeast along the road, without at least being fired at. After calling the 38th Inf Regt CP to warn them of the armored threat coming their way, he called all three of his platoon leaders

¹⁹ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173

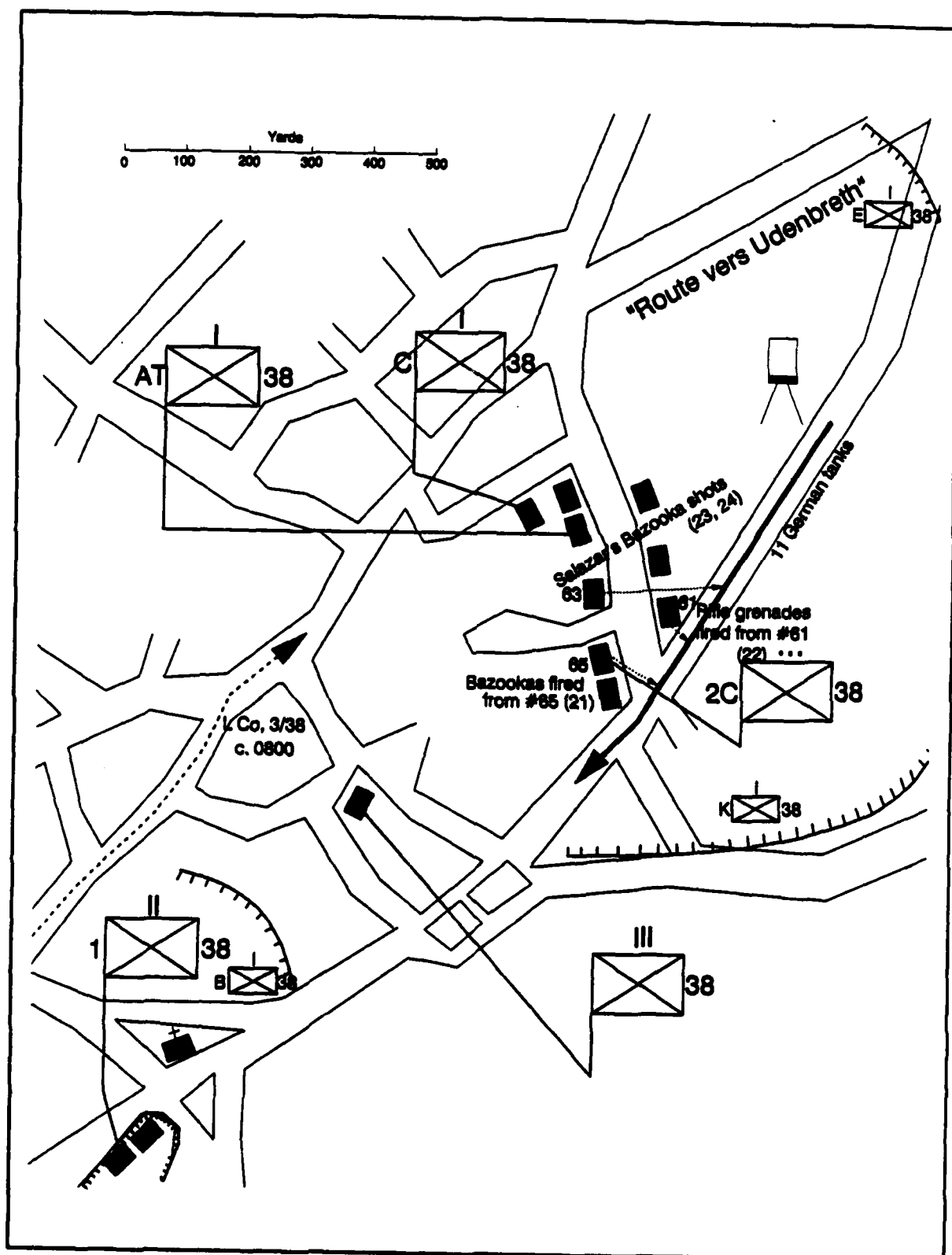


FIGURE 14. POCKET OF RESISTANCE, DECEMBER 18

to see what their situations were. His 2d Plt leader, Lt Marc M. Schowalter, reported that he could not locate the 5th Gun Squad (unknown to him at the time, the Germans had overrun the gun the night before and captured the crew).

As the tanks passed the Drosch and Rauw houses, their column began to "accordion" as the head of the column stopped and the rear vehicles closed up behind. One of the tanks, a Mk V Panther (presumably at or near the very rear of the column), was about 200 yards from Love's CP when it stopped, but he had nothing which could see to hit it because of the intervening buildings. He left his CP and located two self-propelled TDs of the 644th TD Bn, but they refused to move to positions from which they could get a shot at the panzer, saying they had strict orders to stay right where they were "covering critical positions." Love then found an M-4 Sherman tank nearby, and the commander followed Love to a firing position about 75 yards to the Panther's right. "The M-4 finished it off with two rounds, beautiful flanking shots into the side of the hull. Score: One Mk V tank, no US casualties. The doughboys in the windows [of Love's CP] enjoyed picking off the [German] tank crew as they abandoned their vehicle."²⁰

In #61, meanwhile, Adams' 2d Squad commander, Sgt Richard Shinefelt, fired three rifle grenades at the panzers, although to no effect. [ACTION 22] The men of 2d Plt in both the Drosch and Rauw houses sprayed the tanks with small arms fire, killing or wounding almost all of the infantry riding on them. The last three tanks in the column stopped at the intersection just southeast of #65, one facing southwest toward Krinkelt, one facing due west, and the other facing due north towards the Drosch house. This last fired its cannon at #65 but only succeeded in knocking loose some plaster from the walls and ceiling, as had all such shots from other panzers the day before. It also fired a round into the C Co CP, which caught fire as a result. While most of Adams' men had their attention focused on the panzers outside the front of the house, someone looked out of the rear windows and saw a number of American tanks moving into position to the north. Seeing that a large-scale tank battle was about to begin and not wanting to be caught in the middle of it,

²⁰ Ibid.

Adams and his men dashed out of #65 and took cover in #63 across the cul-de-sac, into which the C Co CP was just then relocating.

As they did so, another Panther, a little behind the others, continued southwest toward the one that had just been knocked out by the Sherman. Private Isabel Salazar, one of Love's AT Co staff members, grabbed a bazooka and one of the newly-arrived rockets and ran upstairs from the basement to one of the first-story windows. He fired and knocked out the Panther at 200 yards with that first shot. The Panther's momentum carried it forward until it came to rest alongside the Sherman's kill, the two wrecks very effectively blocking the road.²¹ [ACTION 23]

Within moments after Adams withdrew his platoon from #65, a huge tank battle between the German Panthers and US Shermans and tank destroyers erupted in Rocherath. Details of this fight will not be recounted here since they are not pertinent to the infantry anti-tank defense. Adams and the rest of 2d Plt, plus the Weapons Platoon, stayed in C Co's new CP for about an hour while the tank fight raged around them. At about 1300, when the worst part of the fighting appeared to be over, Capt Rollings returned to the CP from the battalion aid station (where he had gone to have his leg wound attended to after dropping off his prisoners) and sent Adams and his group back to #65. Someone mentioned at the time that 15 German tanks had been destroyed in the tank battle. During the fighting, L Co of the 3/38th Inf took up positions to the left (north) of AT Co, using the cellars and basements of ruined houses as strongpoints.

As they re-entered #65, Adams' 2d Plt realized that they had left their two wounded German prisoners there during the tank battle. One, the wounded SS officer who had thrown the hand grenade earlier that morning, was still there since his leg was too badly injured to walk on; but the other, who also had a leg wound but less severe, was gone. Adams ran out to the front door to look for the escaped man, who he figured couldn't have gotten far yet. He

²¹ Ibid.

was right, for he spotted the man "wobbling down the road toward another house on the corner." Since he was too far away and too exposed for Adams to recapture, Adams shot him.²²

Despite the ferocity of the earlier tank battle, the north-facing panzer that had menaced the intersection that morning was still in position. Adams' men could no longer see it since it was now hidden from their view by the shed adjacent to the Drosch house, but they could hear it warming up its motor from time to time. They could also see, through a gap in a hedge, tankers and infantrymen running to and fro near the tank. Adams watched this activity for a little while, then got his carbine, which he had modified to be fully automatic when desired. Bracing against a ground-floor window sill, Adams began firing bursts at the Germans who appeared in the gap. Apparently they never figured out where the firing was coming from because he carried on with this sniping for some time, and by evening a rather large pile of German dead had accumulated in the gap and they had stopped using it as an avenue of approach.²³

Around 1600, a German tank approaching from Lausdell stopped on the road behind #61, using one of the tanks knocked out earlier as cover, and began firing into #65 to cover for more panzers heading for Krinkelt. Firing from Capt Love's AT Co CP, Pvt Salazar repeated his morning performance by knocking out one of these, a PzJg IV from the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn, as it pulled up behind the two destroyed tanks blocking the southern road.²⁴ [ACTION 24] A few minutes later, the last tank in the column joined the first in bombarding Adams' platoon in #65. The sturdy house withstood the pounding until one of the tank rounds came in through a window or door and exploded inside, destroying the staircase leading from the basement to the first floor. "Amidst the choking smoke and dust, Lt Adams ordered his men out of the house" and into a ditch to the rear of the house. As they did so, the two

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. Also, Cavanagh, op cit, p.114

overwatching panzers followed their fellows southwest down the road into Krinkelt. When they had gone, Adams went into the C Co CP to ask permission to abandon the demolished house, which was proving too easy a target for the panzers, but Capt Rollings refused, saying the position was vital. Accordingly, Adams moved the 2d Plt back into the house as soon as the smoke and dust had cleared enough for them to breathe. He reestablished his guards at the windows and doors. One of the tank rounds had set the half-track in front of the Drosch home on fire, and it continued burning into the night. Since his group was so small and since the Rauw house had no eastward-facing openings and was therefore indefensible at night, Adams withdrew Shinefelt's 2d Squad into #65 when it got dark. Around 1800, US artillery on Elsenborn Ridge began firing "in a target area that seemed to enclose Lt Adams and his group within a semicircular wall of fire which was interposed between him and the enemy. This fire kept up all during the night," and despite the noise, "the men derived a great deal of comfort from it."²⁵

Things were quiet (from a combat standpoint) until about 2200, when a platoon of four German tanks led by a captured Sherman came up the southern road from Krinkelt, turned left at the intersection, and passed by the C Co CP. The tanks had their headlights on, and the Americans along the street were fooled at first by the Sherman into thinking it was an American column. They hailed the tankers in English, but when they got no reply and saw that the subsequent tanks were German, they opened fire with their small arms and machine guns. The tanks, unaffected, continued to the northern road, where they turned right and continued north out of the area.²⁶

At some point during the night, a single German tank drove up and down the street, spraying its machine guns at the houses on either side. [See Figure 15] The men in the AT Co CP fired bazookas at it and hit it several times, but none of the rounds penetrated, and the tank, apparently undamaged, eventually drove away. [ACTION 25]

²⁵ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 December 1944" File #173

²⁶ Ibid.

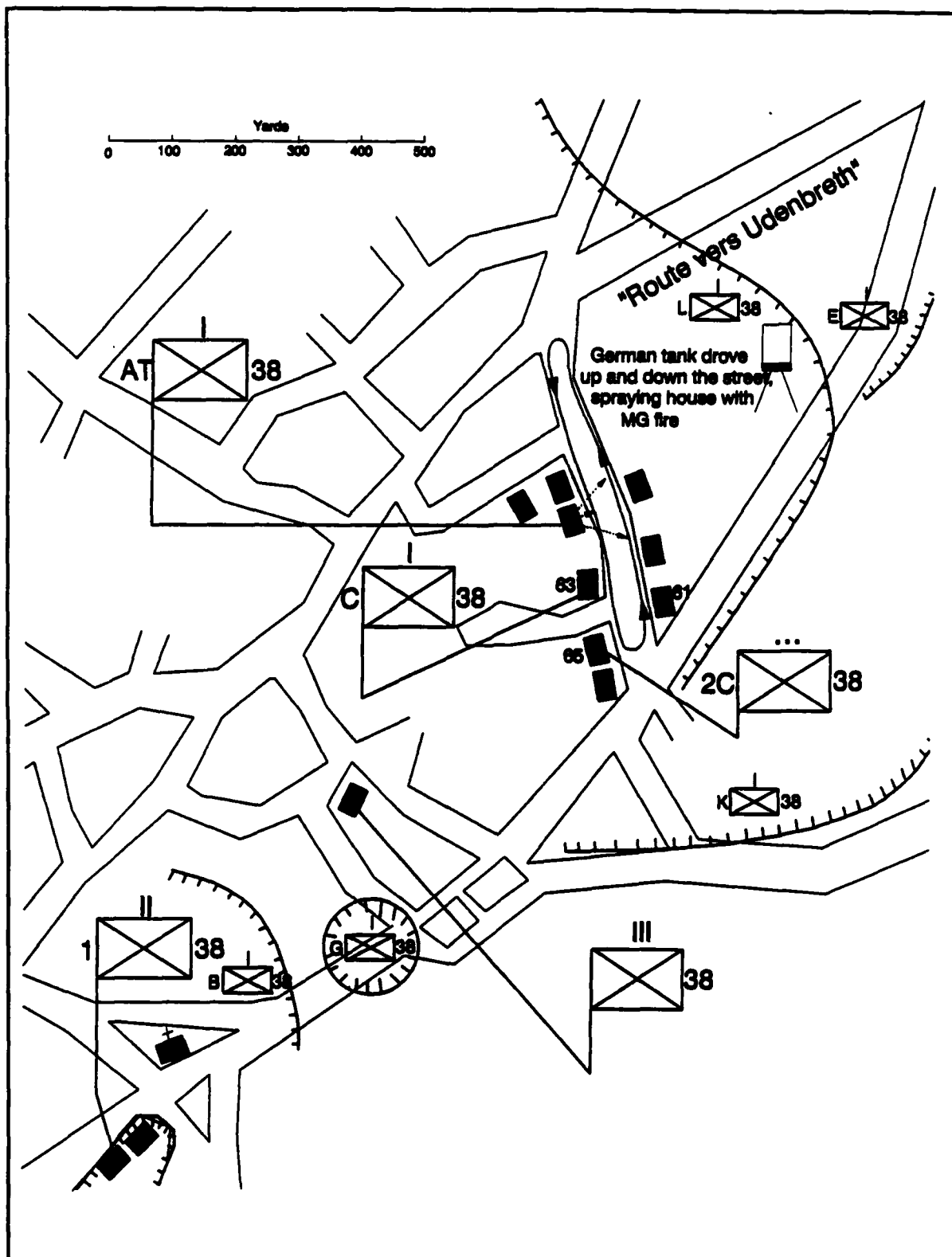


FIGURE 15. POCKET OF RESISTANCE, 19 DECEMBER, EARLY MORNING

In the pre-dawn hours, another lone panzer came down the Route vers Udenbreth and stopped between the two knocked-out tanks blocking the road. There it sat until dawn. At about the same time, a self-propelled tank destroyer of the 644th TD Bn pulled up behind Adams' position at #65. The panzer heard the TD moving into position and fired a few blind shots in that direction, but neither vehicle moved out of its cover to get a better shot for fear of becoming exposed to the other's fire.

Around 0900, four Belgian civilians picked their way through the rubble in the foggy half-light of dawn and entered #65, where they joined the other five civilians who had remained in the basement since the battle began.

A little later, a single Mk V Panther stopped behind the houses just east of Capt Love's AT Co CP and began shelling the CP with its 75mm gun. As Love recalled, this was one of the many instances when the German tanks fired HE shells uselessly against the stone buildings when AP shells would have been deadly. Adams' men in #65, who were not forced to take cover against the tank's fire like Love's men were, opened fire on the panzer with their small arms, but succeeded only in diverting its attention to themselves. The Panther traversed its turret toward them and fired four or five rounds at #65. His shells' ineffectiveness evidently annoyed the German tank commander, for he did an extraordinary thing. Opening the turret's top hatch, he pulled a *panzerfaust* (disposable anti-tank rocket launcher) from inside the tank, rested it on his shoulder, and fired it at the AT Co CP house. The 88mm rocket struck the attic and caved in the entire roof of the house, injuring one of Love's men. The tank commander then calmly withdrew back into the turret, closed the hatch, and the Panther turned and drove away. During the entire episode not a single shot was fired at the panzer leader, so stunned were the Americans at the sight.²⁷

Shortly after, Adams' and Love's men spotted a panzer hiding in a wooden shed about 60 yards north of Love's CP. The panzer had backed into the shed, apparently intending to ambush any American vehicles that might pass by with

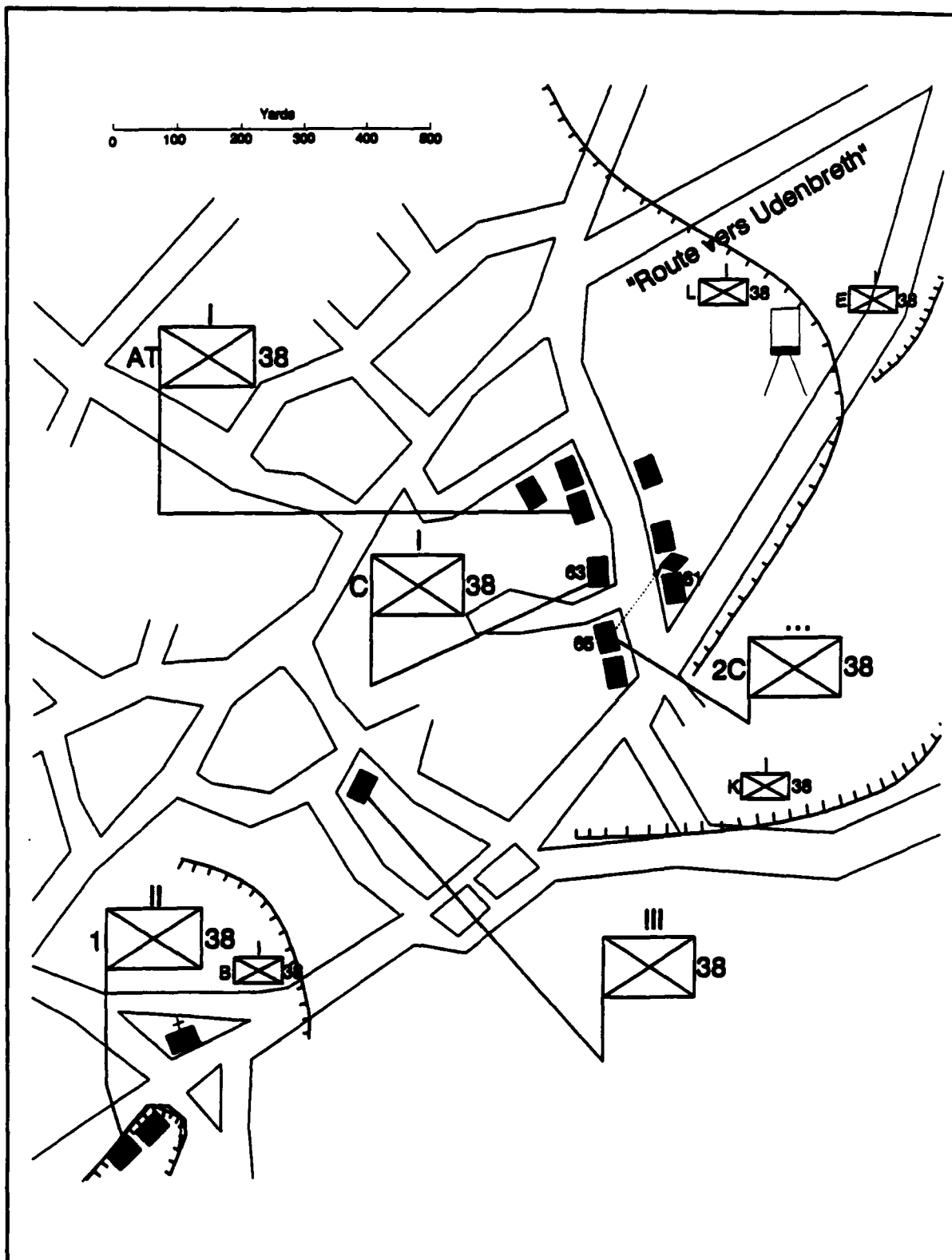
²⁷ Ibid.

a flank shot at point-blank range, but its cannon barrel was too long for its hiding place and protruded from the shed. One of the 644th TD Bn's tank destroyers, so far reluctant to move from its covered position during this battle, was able to fire on the shed without moving. Several rounds demolished the shed and as the panzer moved out to seek more substantial cover, the TD knocked it out.²⁸

At about 0900, a force of German infantry estimated at between a platoon and a reduced company moved into #61, from which Lt Adams had pulled 2d Squad at nightfall the previous evening. Capt Rollings got the TD behind #65 to fire three rounds into the house, and they were apparently very effective, because for the next 45 minutes the Germans could be seen carrying casualties out of the house. Meanwhile, more infantry joined the panzer on the road behind #61 and together they moved to assault Capt Rollings' C Co CP from the right (north) side of #61. [See Figure 16] The panzer began firing its main gun at the TD and the C Co CP at a range of 200 yards.²⁹ While the Americans returned fire and pinned down the German infantry with their small arms and automatic fire, Lt Adams and Sgt Rudolph Kraft, second in command of the 2d Plt squad manning #65, each grabbed a bazooka and climbed into the attic of #65 to get a shot at the panzer. Counting down from three to one, both men fired simultaneously, but Adams' weapon failed to discharge. Kraft's rocket, however, struck the panzer in the starboard bogies. Discarding his malfunctioning bazooka, Adams quickly loaded a second round into Kraft's weapon. This shot penetrated the thin armor on the top of the panzer's turret and exploded inside. [ACTION 26] As Adams bent to pick up a third round (an act which may have saved his life), a high explosive round from another nearby tank burst into the attic and exploded, collapsing the roof and part of the attic walls onto the two men. It was quickly followed by a second round which exploded against the wall, but Adams and Kraft were protected against its effects by the cover of the rubble they were under. The two men dug themselves out and raced down into the basement, where the rest of 2d Plt had

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lt Adams could hear, over the shooting, the German tank commander in the turret shouting orders, including (presumably in German) "Range, 200!" -- Ibid.



already taken cover. Adams had been injured when the wall fell on him, but he continued to command his platoon. For the next three hours the two forces battled across the street as, in between tank rounds, the men of 2d Plt and AT Co sprang to their windows to return fire as best they could.³⁰ At about noon, two more panzers entered the intersection and added the weight of their fire, targeting Adams' #65 and the other houses in the area. Seeing the little effect their 75mm shells were having against the stone houses, the panzers switched to spraying the area with their machine guns. A number of bursts struck the shed adjacent to the Drosch house. This shed had a thatched roof that was easily ignited by the tracer rounds. Lt Roy E. Mode, one of the C Co officers in the house with Lt Adams, tried to extinguish the blaze with two five-gallon jerry cans of water, but was unsuccessful and the flames soon spread to the house proper. The Drosch home, #65 Rocherath, which the 2d Plt, C Co, had defended so successfully for two days, finally had to be abandoned. While one GI ran to the top of what remained of the basement stairs to warn the civilians, yelling "Home brennt; you must go!", the rest of the platoon exited the rear of the house and down a track leading past #64 and westward toward Wirtzfeld.³¹

At 1300, the commander of the 644th's self-propelled TDs in the area reported to Love and informed him that he (Love) was now in command of the vehicles and could deploy them as he chose. Finally able to countermand the orders that had kept the TDs fixed in place and unable to fire at many targets during the battle, Love quickly issued movement orders to several of the vehicles, placing one on the north side of his CP building and another in reserve behind the house. Around 1500, a Mk IV panzer that had worked its way around to the rear of Love's position began shelling the area from the west. [See Figure 17] One of its rounds hit and penetrated the TD behind the CP, wounding all the crew members. One of the AT men in the CP reacted and hit the Mk IV with a bazooka round, immobilizing it, while Love maneuvered one of the other TDs around to finish it off. Evidently the bazooka round had hit

³⁰ Ibid. Also, Cavanagh, op cit, p.126

³¹ USA ETO Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 December 1944" File #173; Cavanagh, op cit, p.127

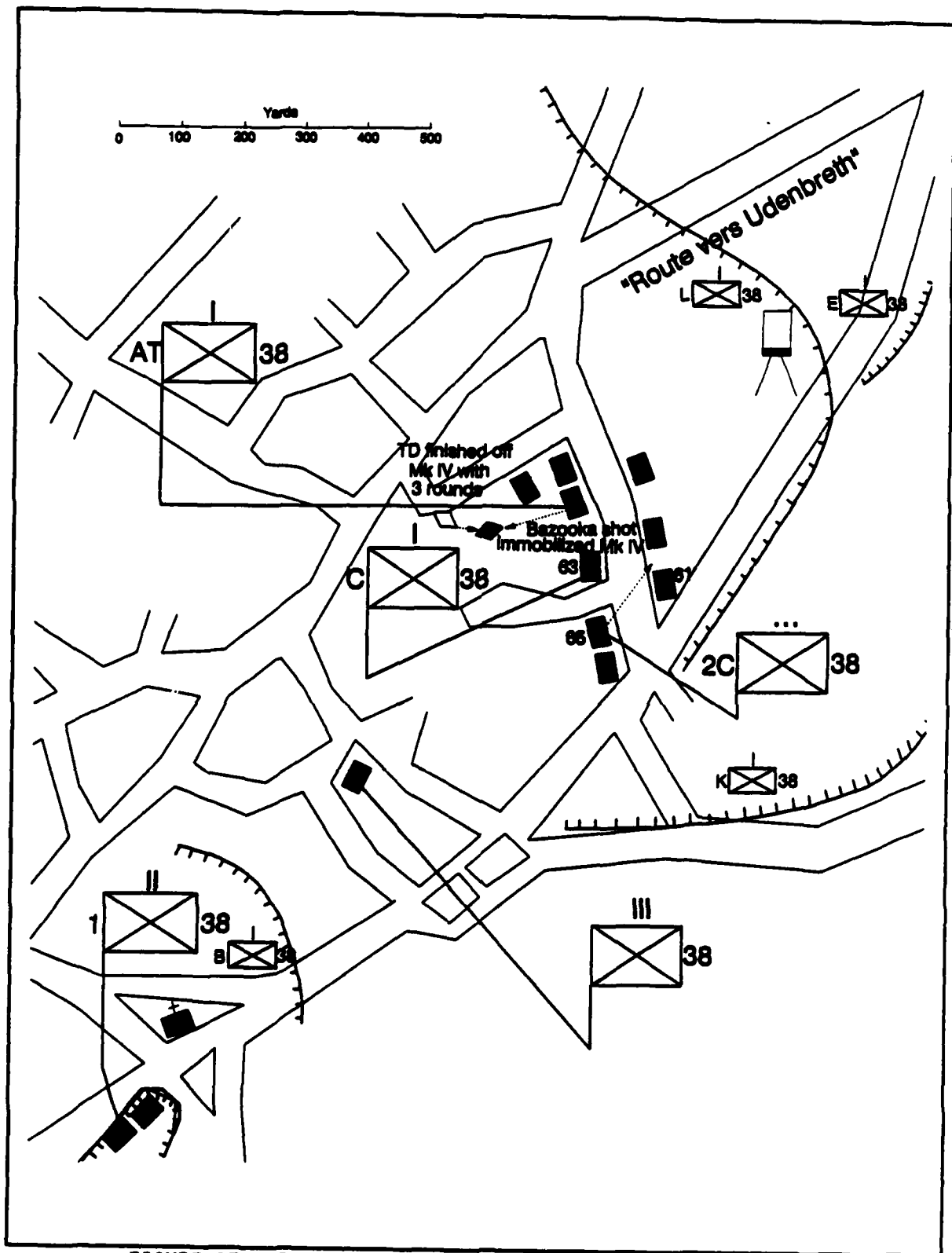


FIGURE 17. POCKET OF RESISTANCE, 19 DECEMBER, AFTERNOON

the panzer's engine compartment, because even though it saw the maneuvering TD it couldn't rotate its turret fast enough to get a shot at it. "Because of the locations of the buildings, the TD had to come up with its gun pointing to the rear, and while the Mk IV was traversing slowly, as if by hand, through 90°, the TD traversed through about 200°, got off three rounds, and took the turret right off the Mk IV. Another Mk IV that was moving in near the first one apparently saw what was happening, for he pulled out."³² [ACTION 27]

Just before 1700, Capt Love was summoned to attend a meeting at the 38th Regimental CP a few blocks away. At this meeting, Col Boos issued orders to his battalion and company commanders to begin the withdrawal to Berg and Elsenborn at 1730. Love's AT Co was to follow behind L Co, which was attached to the 2/38th, on the road west through Wirtzfeld. Boos instructed the commanders to destroy any equipment, German or American, that could not be carried out. Capt Love returned to his company and got the preparations for withdrawal underway. Finally, around 1830, a radio message informed him that L Co had cleared the area, so Love put the remnants of his three gun platoons and mine platoon on the road. By 2100 the company had reached Elsenborn, where it was ordered to occupy a section of the new defense line. This was accomplished by the morning of the 20th.

³² USA ETO Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 December 1944" File #173

ACTION 20: FROM THE HIP
1845 Hours, 17 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Mps Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Unknown; probably no more than one or two squads, considering small volume of small arms fire	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One German panzer, type uncertain; either Mk IV, Mk V Panther, PzJg IV Jagdpanzer, or PzJg V Jagdpanther	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzer-division</u> ; Parker, <u>Notes for Hitler's Last Gamble</u>

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	One US SP TD could have fired on the German panzer but refused to do so	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	One slightly wounded	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None; panzer was sprayed by .30cal MG rounds--no effect	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	1845	1845	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Just after dusk. Foggy and intermittent drizzle	Just after dusk. Foggy and intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Approx. 75 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Unknown number of .30cal MG rounds fired at tank; no effect	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	None; stationary	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type; By this time, after several days of battle, perhaps 40-80 rounds?	1 belt (100 rounds?) of .30cal MG ammunition	

ACTION 21: UNSTOPPABLE FORCE, Part 1
0730 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Approx. one company of panzergrenadiers riding on the tanks	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. Two	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Eleven tanks or jagd-panzers	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	"Many direct hits" scored against the tank column, but apparently no penetrations	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	0730	0730	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Approx. 100 yards	Map measurement
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Unknown number of bazooka rounds; probably at least 4-6, since "many direct hits" were recorded	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Traveling in column down street at oblique angle to defenders' position	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	

ACTION 22: UNSTOPPABLE FORCE, Part 2
0730 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Approx. one company of panzergrenadiers riding on the tanks	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Eleven tanks or jagd-panzers	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	Most or all of the infantry riding the tanks were killed or wounded by small arms fire	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None; three rifle grenades were fired at the panzers as they passed but all were ineffective	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	0730	0730	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	< 50 yards	Map measurement
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Three rifle grenades, presumably AT rounds	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Traveling in column down street at oblique angle to defenders' position	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type	At least three rifle grenades	

ACTION 23: SALAZAR'S FIRST KILL
0730 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Approx. one company of panzergrenadiers riding on the tanks	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Eleven tanks or jagd-panzers	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	Most or all of the infantry riding the tanks were killed or wounded by small arms fire	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One Mk V Panther knocked out by bazooka shot to the starboard flank	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	0730	0730	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	200 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	One bazooka round	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Traveling in column down street at oblique angle to defenders' position	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	

ACTION 24: SALAZAR'S SECOND KILL
1600 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. One	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	At least two, including one PzJg IV of the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzer-division; Parker, Notes for Hitler's Last Gamble

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One PzJg IV jagdpanzer knocked out by bazooka shot to the starboard flank	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	1600	1600	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	Dawn; foggy, with intermittent fog and drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	200 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	One bazooka round	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Two tanks/jagdpanzers overwatching while remainder of group, at least three or four vehicles, advanced past defenders position on the road to the SW	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	Two overwatching, at least three or four advancing	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	PzJg IV carried 55 rounds for 75mm main gun and 600 rounds for 7.92mm MG	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II, p.202

ACTION 25: NIGHT DISTURBANCE
Night, 18-19 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. At least two	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One German tank or jagdpanzer	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	None; German vehicle hit by "several" bazooka rounds, no penetrations	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	Night	Night	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy	Dark, foggy	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	< 50 yards, probably < 25 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	"Several" bazooka rounds	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Vehicle drove up and down the street, spraying the houses sheltering the US infantry with MG fire	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type; at least several hundred MG rounds	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	

ACTION 26: TEAMWORK AND HEIGHT ADVANTAGE
0900 Hours, 19 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	About a company of infantry	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. Two	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	At least two German tanks or jagdpanzers	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	One slightly wounded	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One tank/jagdpanzer hit in the starboard bogies and then in the turret by bazooka rounds. Second shot penetrated turret top armor and exploded inside the vehicle	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	0900	0900	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Daylight; some light fog	Daylight; some light fog	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	200 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	Two bazooka rounds	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Stationary	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	One overwatching, one firing	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Dependent on vehicle type	At least three bazooka rounds, probably more	

ACTION 27: THE ASSIST
1500 Hours, 19 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	In houses along west side of street, facing German attacks from east and north	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	C Co(-), 1/38th Inf, Wpns Plt elements, and AT Co CP personnel; about 50-70 men total	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. Two c. None d. One	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One Mk IV panzer from I Bn, 12th SS-PzRegt	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One Mk IV panzer immobilized and damaged by bazooka round; finished off by three rounds from an SP TD maneuvering behind it	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	1500	1500	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Normal	Normal	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Uncertain; perhaps approx. 200 yards for bazooka	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	One bazooka round, which immobilized the tank and damaged the turret traverse speed, perhaps by hitting the engine; three 76mm AP rounds from TD destroyed the tank	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Stationary	---	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good. Infantry occupied strong stone houses along street, but had no heavy weapons or anti-tank support	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders knew that large numbers of German tanks and infantry were in the area, and approx. what their objectives were	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ET0 Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk IV Panzer carried 80 rounds for 75mm main gun and 2700 7.92mm MG rounds	Unknown number of bazooka rounds	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u> , p.200

ACTIONS 28-29

Name: One Panzer's Saga

Location: Krinkelt-Rocherath, Belgium

Time: 0800-1000 hours, 18 December 1944

The bulk of the 1/38th Infantry, under LtCol Frank T. Mildren, withdrew from Wahlerscheid beginning at 1450 on 17 December with orders to assume defensive positions in the twin villages. Making their way down the forest road through the Rocherath Baracken and into Rocherath as the Germans hammered Col McKinley's 1/9th to the east, Mildren's battalion reached its positions around dusk. C Company, as has already been reported,³³ occupied some houses just southwest of the water tower in Rocherath. A and B Companies moved east of the villages, but a German tank-infantry attack overran B Co before it had a chance to dig in and the remnants of the company withdrew into the village. Sporadic German attacks throughout the evening and early morning of the 18th resulted in the rather chaotic American defense depicted in Figure 18.

Around 0730 on the morning of 18 December, a force of German tanks, probably Panthers³⁴ of the I Pz Bn, came down the southernmost of the two main roads running through the twin villages, past the water tower and C Co's position. It seems likely that these were the same 11 tanks engaged by Lt Adams and Capt Love just before the Rocherath tank battle began. By about 0800, five of these tanks had penetrated through that area and were nearing the intersection in Krinkelt that was flanked by the church and by the building housing Col Mildren's 1/38th CP. The 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" says that Mildren's men were ready for the tanks, which is consistent with Capt Love's assertion that he notified the battalion CP when the tanks passed his position. As the panzers reached the intersection, Mildren's men in the nearby buildings (including a small force in the church) opened up on them with every automatic weapon available. This

³³ See preceding actions, "Pocket of Resistance"

³⁴ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge, 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173

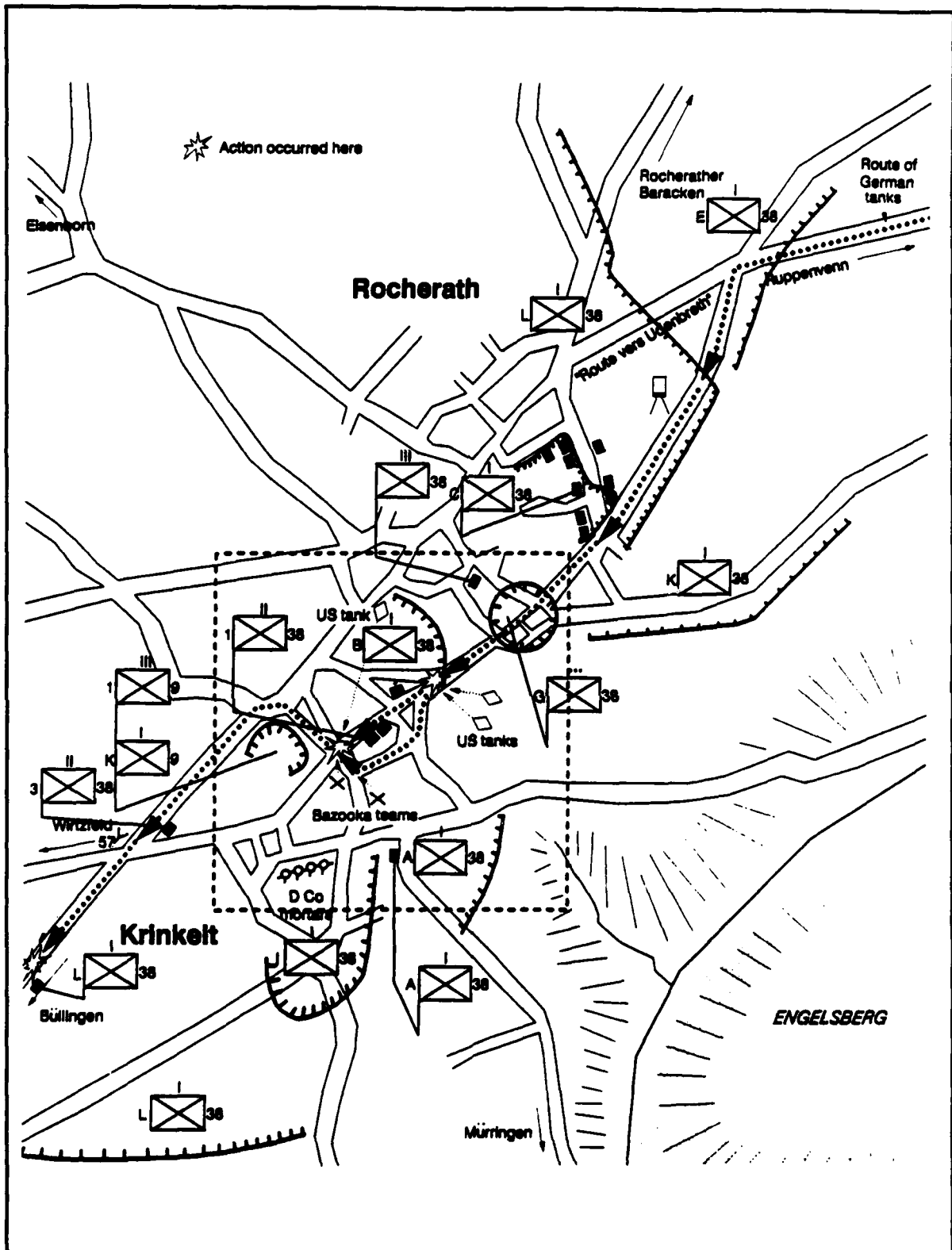


FIGURE 18. AMERICAN DEFENSE, 18 DECEMBER

had no effect on the buttoned-up panzers, which began returning fire with their cannon. They directed much of this fire at Mildren's CP, where there were several light machine guns posted in the upper story windows. The American gunners ran from room to room, staying one step ahead of the shells that the German tanks were hurling through the windows, all the while keeping up the stream of fire at the panzers.

While the German tanks were thus engaged, stationary in the middle of the street, they drew the fire of some Sherman tanks that were stationed in the outskirts of the village east of the CP. Their fire knocked out the first two panzers in the column (See Figure 19) and spurred the others into action. The next two panzers bypassed their stricken comrades and continued southwest down the road past Mildren's CP. When the first one reached the next intersection, a bazooka team from the 1/38th's AT Platoon (one of five bazooka teams from various units in the area) fired and hit it in the track (presumably in the port side, given the panzer's direction of travel). The panzer was thus immobilized, but could still pivot in place, and its crew and weaponry were undamaged. The German crew swung the tank 180° about, spraying the area with the vehicle's machine guns. They then began firing the tank's cannon and both machine guns³⁵ to the northeast, past Mildren's CP. Lt Howard O. Emerich, the 1/38th's Battalion Motor Officer, was just traveling to the CP from the northwest when he found the wounded Panther blocking his path, so he retraced his steps a bit and found a Sherman tank of the 741st Tk Bn which he guided into a position about 200 yards due north of the CP. From there it had a clear view of the German tank, and the Sherman's first shot penetrated the Panther's turret on the port side and silenced the tank³⁶

³⁵ The fact that the vehicle is specifically mentioned firing two machine guns as well as its cannon is significant, in that it helps us narrow the possibilities of what type of vehicles they really were. We know from the German gliederungen (TOEs) that there were only four types of panzers/panzerjägers involved with the 12th SS-PzD at the twin villages: Mk IV Panzers, Mk V Panthers, Mk IV Jagdpanzers, and Mk V Jagdpanthers. The latter two vehicle types only had one machine gun apiece, so the vehicles in this platoon must have been either Mk IV or Mk V tanks. Further, this tells us that they were from the 1 Pz Bn of the 12th SS-PzRegt, the only German unit in the battle to employ turreted AFVs. Unfortunately, both Mk IVs and Panthers had either two or three machine guns, so we cannot narrow the field of possibilities any further than this. However, since the American eyewitnesses refer to them repeatedly as Panthers, we shall bow to their judgment and refer to them likewise for the remainder of this section.

³⁶ USA ETO 2d ID Combat Interview "Battle of the Bulge: 17-20 Dec 1944" File #173

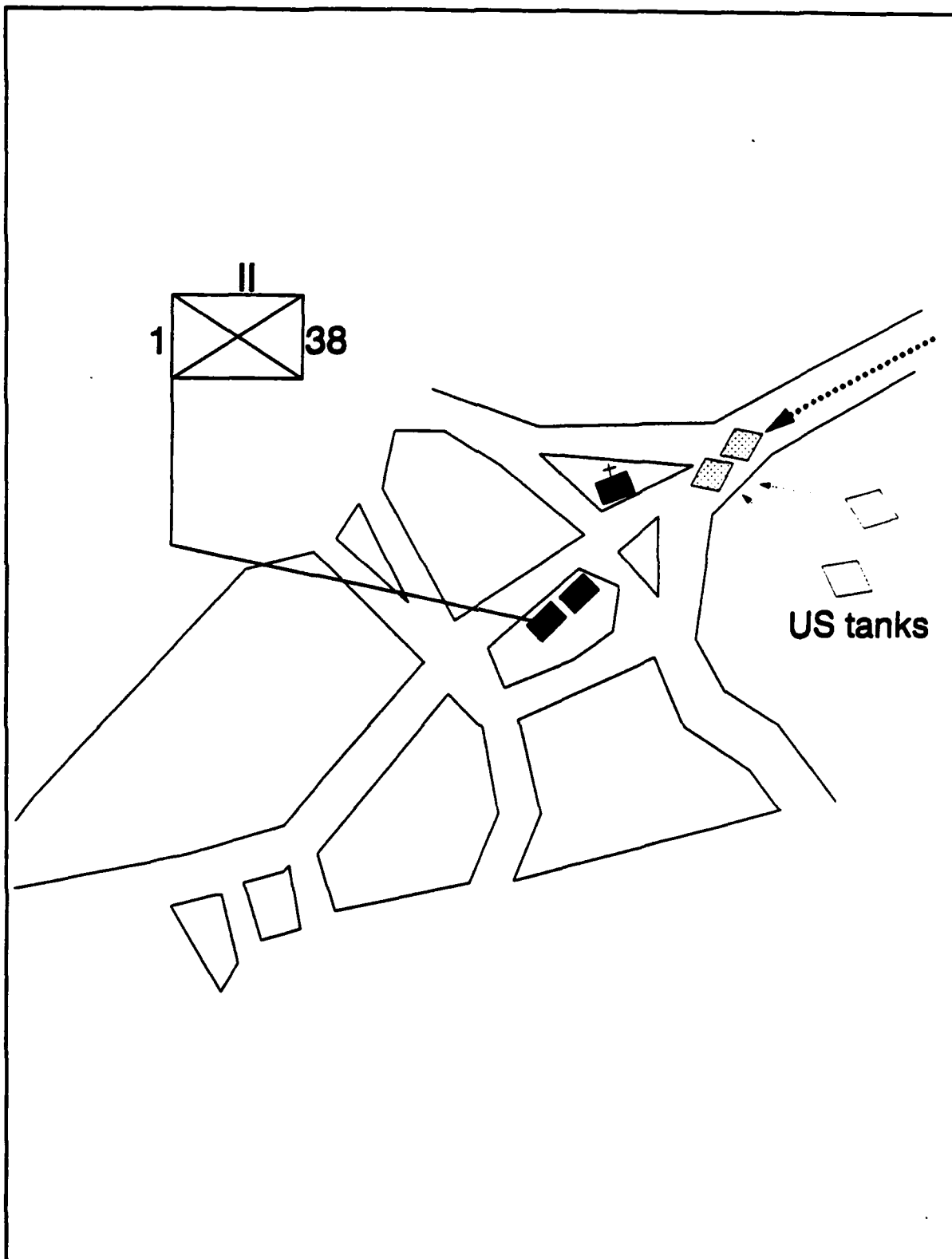


FIGURE 19. KNOCK OUT OF FIRST TWO TANKS

Bazooka teams from A Co and the D Co 81mm mortar platoon, working in tandem, fired several shots which destroyed the fourth Panther not far behind the third (See Figure 20). [ACTION 28]

The fifth Panther proved to be more of a problem. Apparently following some distance behind the preceding four tanks, it skirted past the remains of the first two panzers and past the church, where the tank commander apparently saw the third panzer either already destroyed or in the process of being so. In order to avoid a similar fate, the fifth Panther turned left at the church, intending to bypass the dangerous area by using a parallel street one block south. It turned right on the street behind Mildren's CP, then right again when it reached the next street. The AT Platoon bazooka team fired several rounds at the Panther as it approached the carcasses of the third and fourth panzers, but none of the rounds penetrated the tank's armor. Upon reaching the intersection, the crew of the fifth Panther found the road blocked by the wreck of the third tank; its body and cannon, pointing northeast, thoroughly prohibited further movement in that direction. While the fifth Panther was backing and filling in order to turn around, Lt Sidney P. Dane, the 1/38th's S-2, and Sgt Charles Wood ran out of the CP building to a place nearby (presumably a barn or pen of some sort) where there were some cows belonging to one of the local farmers. To keep the Panther from going back the way it had come, where it would be loose in A and I Cos' rear areas, but lacking any anti-tank weapons, Dane and Wood stampeded the cattle up the middle of the street toward the German tank. The Panther crew fired one of their machine guns, killing some of the cows, but nevertheless decided against running through the herd.³⁷ They swung the tank to the left and crashed through the back yards and gardens of the houses on that block. All the while, Sgt Grover Farrell,³⁸ in the upper story of the CP building, was directing a stream of .50cal fire onto the tank to keep its crew buttoned up or perhaps hoping to get a lucky hit through a vision slit.

³⁷ One of the American sources speculates that perhaps the German tank crew was afraid of throwing a track while running over the cows, but that seems unlikely. Nor is it consistent with SS behavior that they veered off course for humanitarian reasons.

³⁸ In some sources Farrell is identified as being only a private.

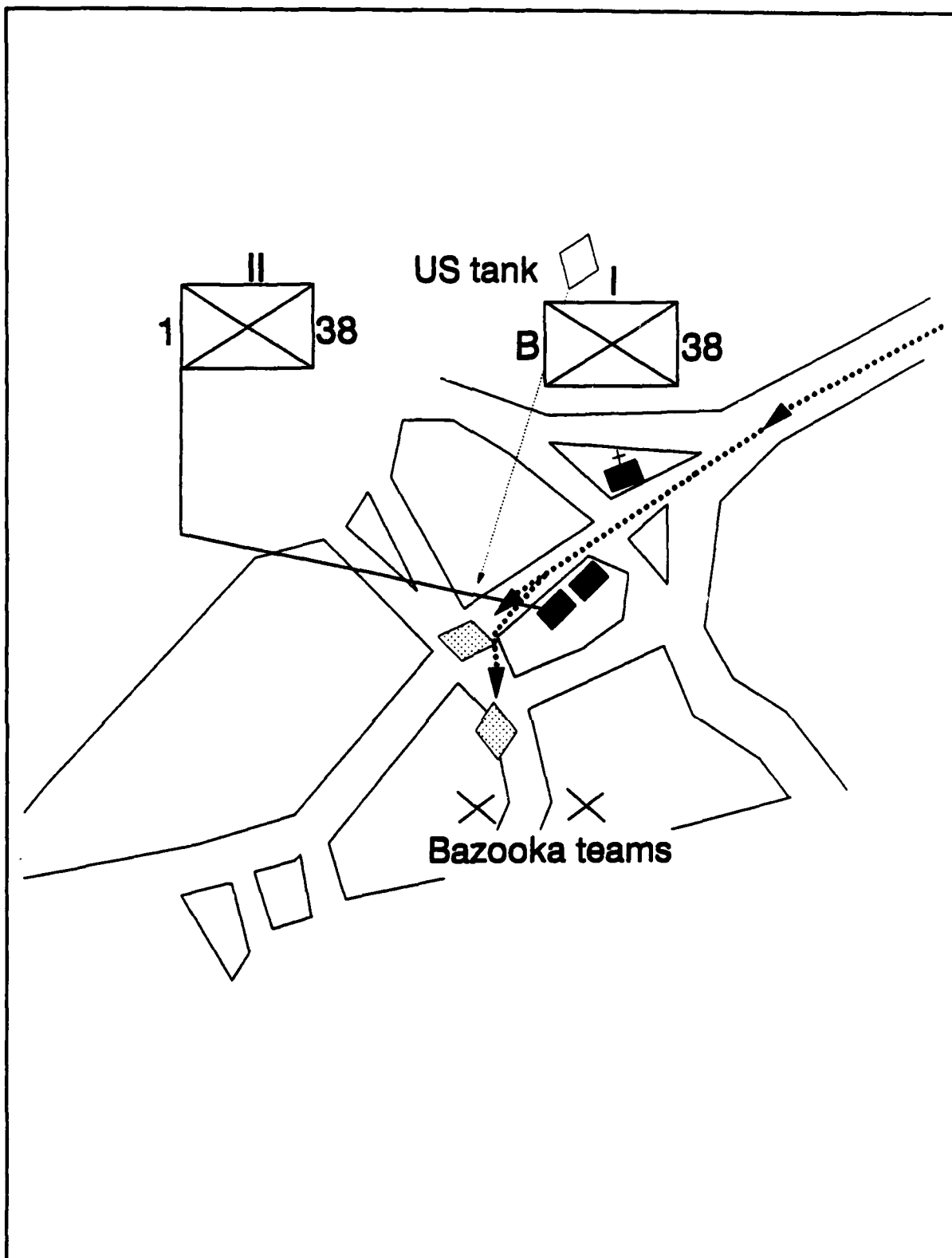


FIGURE 20. SILENCING TANKS 3 AND 4

The Panther turned again and entered the alley between the CP building and the next building to the east. At the other end of the alley, the commander spotted three American jeeps parked in front of the CP and drove the Panther out of the alley and over the jeeps two or three times, smashing them into unrecognizable piles of wreckage. Still shrugging off the heavy automatic weapons fire that was hitting it from all sides, the Panther then moved so that it was able to stick its cannon muzzle through one of the CP's ground floor windows. To the intense relief and puzzlement of the Americans inside, however, the tank did not fire, although when backing out of the position a few minutes later the tank's fender knocked loose a corner of the building. Apparently satisfied that there were no other targets nearby worthy of its attention, or perhaps fearful of the American bazooka teams roaming the area, the Panther roared off down the street, past the wreck of the third Panther and then northwest. The tank then turned southwest on the Route vers Udenbreth as if heading for either Büllingen or Wirtzfeld. (See Figure 21)

Farther to the southwest, at the CP of Col Barsanti's 3/38th Infantry, Maj Vivian Paul, the 38th Infantry Regiment's S-4, was just leaving to return to the Regimental CP in Rocherath after a meeting with Col Barsanti. He and his driver had just gotten into their jeep, parked in front of the CP, when the surviving Panther "rounded the corner going lickety-split," headed right for them. Maj Paul and the driver leapt from the jeep and rolled into a roadside ditch just as the Panther slammed into the jeep and crushed it. At that moment, one of the 57mm AT guns of the 3/38th's AT Platoon, which was covering the Route vers Udenbreth against just such a German incursion, fired at the Panther. The shell struck the panzer and apparently damaged the turret traverse mechanism, for the Panther continued down the street but "with the turret swinging wildly, completely out of control." [ACTION 29] The 3/38th's Assistant S-3, Lt Fred Sutton, was nearby and had witnessed the whole episode. He ran to a nearby Sherman tank and notified them of the Panther in the neighborhood. The Sherman quickly fired a round at the Panther but missed. The Panther was lost to the Sherman's view before the American tank could fire a second shot.

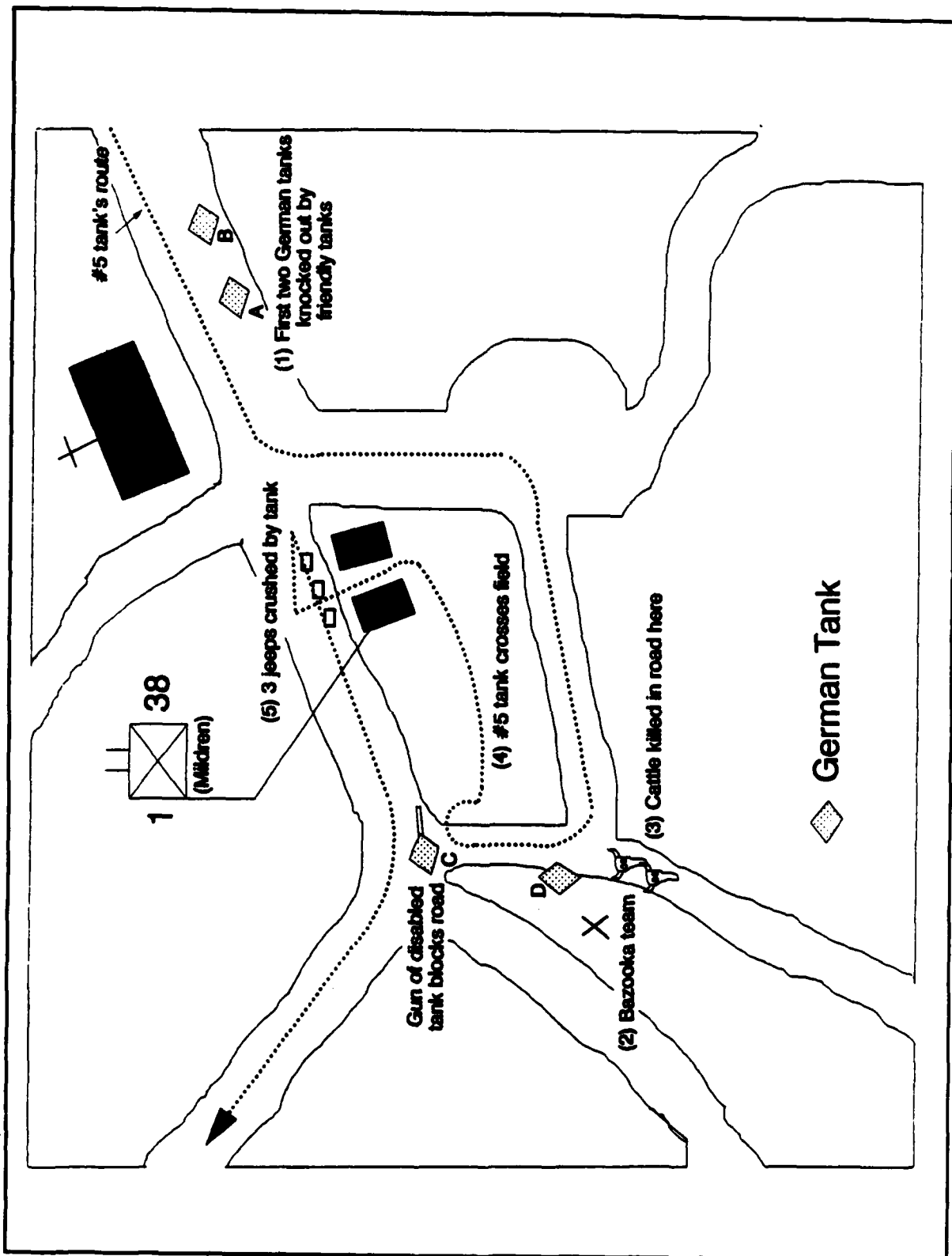


FIGURE 21. THE END OF PANTHER FIVE'S SAGA

The Panther pressed on toward Büllingen, approaching the L Co CP. Just as it passed in front of that building, a self-propelled TD from the 644th TD Bn, which Col Barsanti had placed near the 3/38th CP to guard against a German attack from Büllingen, fired three rounds in rapid succession into the Panther's thinner rear armor at a range of 250-300 yards. That finally stopped the rampaging Panther, and as the crew bailed out of the tank, the L Co riflemen picked them off. When the panzer's hulk was examined later, it was found to have 11 bazooka holes in it (none of which apparently penetrated all the way through the armor), as well as the three TD penetrations in the rear and whatever mark the AT gun's round had left.

ACTION 28: Panthers Three and Four Knocked Out
0800 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Bazooka teams firing from buildings at German tanks passing by in the street	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	Elements of several companies scattered throughout the area	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. None d. 5 bazooka teams in the area; three firing	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Two Mk V Panthers from the I Pz Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision</u> ; Parker, <u>Notes for Hitler's Last Gamble</u>

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One Mk V immobilized by bazooka shot to port track; finished off by US Sherman tank. Other Mk V destroyed by "several" bazooka shots	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	0800	0800	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Full daylight but over- cast, with intermittent fog	Full daylight but over- cast, with intermittent fog	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Unknown, but given the nature of the terrain, probably less than 50 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	One bazooka round for Panther three; "several" bazooka rounds for Panther four	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	One pair of Panthers driving along street in line astern	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and weapons emplaced in buildings throughout the town, covering all routes of German approach	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; Germans had been attacking the villages for 24 hours, including several incursions by tanks	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	One Panther was in a position to be overwatching, but there is no indication that it was performing that function	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk V Panther carried 79-82 rounds for 75mm main gun, and 4200 7.92mm MG rounds	At least several bazooka rounds	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u> , p.202

ACTION 29: The End of Panther Five's Saga
0800 Hours, 18 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	57mm AT gun covering one of the main roads through Krinkelt	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	At least two companies of infantry in the area	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. One c. One d. Unknown, but probably several	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One Mk V Panther from the I Pz Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173); Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision</u> ; Parker, <u>Notes for Hitler's Last Gamble</u>
6. US Tanks Present	---	One M-4 Sherman	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One Mk V Panther hit by 57mm AT shot, damaging the turret traverse mechanism; Panther then destroyed by three 76mm rounds from a US SP TD	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
9. Artillery	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
10. Obstacles	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	Cold, overcast; intermittent drizzle	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
12. Time of Day	1000	1000	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
13. Light and Visibility	Full daylight but over- cast, with intermittent fog	Full daylight but over- cast, with intermittent fog	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
14. Terrain	Town	Town	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	---	Unknown. Since the AT gun was covering the main street, which was long and straight, it could have been several hundred yards. However, since it was known that an AT gun probably wouldn't penetrate the frontal armor of the German tanks, it may have been sat up for a flank shot (perpendicular to the road), in which case the range would probably be no more than 25 yards	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	---	One 57mm AP round	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Driving along street	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; gun and infantry had had 24 hours in which to emplace and conceal themselves in the buildings	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; Germans had been attacking the villages for 24 hours, including several incursions by tanks	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	USA ETO Cbt Int "Battle of the Bulge" (File #173)
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Mk V Panther carried 79-82 rounds for 75mm main gun, and 4200 7.92mm MG rounds	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30 HE and 70 APC	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u> , p.202; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

**INDEX TO FILES AND REFERENCES ON ENGAGEMENTS
AT KRINKELT-ROCHERATH, BELGIUM**

A2D2 FILING SYSTEM FOR ALL RECORDS

The location in brackets [] is where SAIC obtained the information.

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The Pentagon Library, Washington, DC	Pentagon
Office of the Center of Military History, Washington, DC	OCMH
Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD	Suitland
National Archives and Record Service, Washington, DC	National Archives
The Armor School Library, Fort Knox, KY	Ft. Knox, KY
The Infantry School Library, Fort Benning, GA	Ft. Benning, GA
The Library of Congress, Washington, DC	LC
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2	<p>Rivette, Donald E. "The Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach." <u>Infantry Journal</u>. Vol. LVII. No. 4. October 1945, pg. 19-23.</p> <p>[Ft. Benning, GA]</p>
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The Library of Congress, Washington, DC
US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA
Fort Belvoir Library, Fort Belvoir, VA
Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart, Germany

ABBREVIATION

Pentagon
OCMH
Suitland
National Archives
Ft. Knox, KY
Ft. Benning, GA
LC
USAMHI
Ft. Belvoir
Stuttgart

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629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, October 1944, [File TDBN-629 -0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, November 1944, [File TDBN -629-0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, December 1944, [File TDBN -629-0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, January-June 1945, [File TDBN-629-0.3].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, July-December 1944, [File TDBN-629-0.3].

[File TDBN-629-0.7 Box 23583]

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, January 1945.

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, February 1945.

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, March 1945.

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, April 1945.

[Box 23584]

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, May 1945, [File TDBN-629 -0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, June 1945, [File TDBN-629 -0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, September 1945, [File TDBN -629-0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, 1 May - 27 November 1945, [File TDBN-629-0.7].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Report, February 1945, [File TDBN-629-0.9].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion Messages, September 1944, [File TDBN -629-0.12].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1943, 1945, [File TDBN-629-1.13].

629th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Periodic Report, 31 January -

February 1945, [File TDBN-629-3.1].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23585]

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 15 December 1941 - June 1943, [File TDBN-630-0.1].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 15 December 1941 - 31 December 1943, [File TDBN-630-0.1].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, June 1945, [File TDBN-630-0.3].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, August-September, November 1944, [File TDBN-630-0.7].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January 1945, [File TDBN-630-0.7].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, February-May 1945, [File TDBN-630-0.7].

[Box 23586]

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1945-1946, [File TDBN-630-1.13].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Periodic Report, June 1945, [File TDBN-630-2.1].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal, June 1945, [File TDBN-630-2.2].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Journal, June 1945, [File TDBN-630-3.2].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Periodic Report, June 1945, [File TDBN-630-3.1].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Report, January-May 1945, [File TDBN-630-0.9].

630th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Report, July-December 1944, [File TDBN-630-0.9].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23587]

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 15 December 1941 - 31

December 1943, [File TDBN-631-0.1].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion History, Year 1944, [File TDBN-631-0.1].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion History, Year 1945, [File TDBN-631-0.1].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, 17 February - 15 December 1945, [File TDBN-631-0.7].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1942-1945, [File TDBN-631-1.13].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion Troop Movement Orders, 14 December 1941 - 30 November 1945, [File TDBN-631-3.18].

631st Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, 26 August 1942 - 24 February 1945, [File TDBN-631-0.7].

633rd Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-633-0 to TDBN-633-1.13 Box 23592]

Good TDBN organization charts but skimpy otherwise.

634th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-634-0.8 11-27-44 to 11-30-44 and 1-1-45 to 1-9-45 Box 23605].

No useful information.

635th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-635-0.3 to TDBN-635-MD-0.1 Box 23611]

Anti-tank action in Belgium, December 1944.

636th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-636-0.3 1 September 1943 - 30 September 1944 Box 23612]

Operations Reports, Operation AVALANCHE, September-December 1943.

Reports for May, June, September 1944.

[File TDBN-636-0.3 10 October - 31 December 1944 Box 23613]

No useful information. Road blocking missions in October and November 1944.

638th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-638-0.1 to 0.3 Box 23621]

Brief messages, lack of detail, no useful anti-tank information.

[Boxes 23622 through 23630]

Journals with message logs, map overlays, no useful anti-tank information.

641st Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-641-0.1 to 1.13 Box 23634]

Unit History, August 1944 - March 1945.

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-644-0 to 0.3 30 November 1944 Box 23635]

Booklet of Unit History, Operations Reports for July, August 1944.

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, Year 1944, [File TDBN-644-0.1 (14177)].

[Box 23636]

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, [File TDBN-644 -0.3].

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, 1 December 1944 - 31 March 1945, [File TDBN-644-0.3 (6687)].

[Box 23637 and 23639]

644th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Reports, [File TDBN-644].

645th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23639 through 23642]

Journals with map overlays from January-July 1944.

[Boxes 23643 through 23649]

Journals with map overlays.

[File TDBN-645-0.7 to TDBN-645-0.12 1 April 1945 Box 23650]

All in 1945, no anti-tank action.

[File TDBN-645-2.2 to TDBN-645-0.3 1 October 1943 Box 23652]

Journals covering Operation DRAGON, no anti-tank action discussed.

648th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-648-0.1 to TDBN-649-1.13 Box 23654]

No useful anti-tank information. 649th never left the US.

654th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23658]

Detailed History of the unit, August 1944, Mortain actions.

[Boxes 23659 through 23672]

S-3 Journal files and map overlays.

[Box 23662]

S-2 Journal, December 1944.

[Box 23665]

Unit Report, Detailed encounter and overlay, September 1944.

656th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23674]

History of the Unit.

[Boxes 23675 through 23678]

Journals and After Action Reports indicate no action against tanks.

691st Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23686 and 23687]

History shows October 1944 arrival in France, Journals.

692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion

692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, [File TDBN-692-0.3].

692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion Message Log, [File TDBN-692-0.12 Box 23693].

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion

From Oran to Tunisia History 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion, 15 December 1941 - May 1945 and a Diary of 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion, [File

TDBN-701-0.1 Box 23699].

[File TDBN-701-0.3 Box 23700]

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, September 1942 - May 1945.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, 3 May - 31 October 1943.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, 1944.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, January 1944 - April 1945.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Operations Report, June-December 1944.

[File TDBN-701-201.7 to 702-1.13 Box 23701]

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion Daily Journals, June 1945, [File TDBN -701-0.7].

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1941-1945, [File TDBN -701-1.13].

[File TDBN-701-2.2 4-1-44 to 7-31-44 Box 23702]

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal, April 1944.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal, May 1944.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal, June 1944.

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal, July 1944.

[File TDBN-701-2.2 8-1-44 to 12-31-44 Box 23703]

701st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-2 Journal: four each for April, September, October, December 1944.

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23714]

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History for Year 1944, [File TDBN -702-0.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History for Year 1945, [File TDBN -702-0.1].

Brief History of 702d Tank Destroyer Battalion, [File TDBN-702-0.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Report September-November 1944,
April-June 1945, [File TDBN-702-0.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report July 1944 - June
1945, [File TDBN-702-0.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Operational Report, 1-30 July 1945,
[File TDBN-702-0.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, June-October 1944,
[File TDBN-702-2.01].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, January-May 1945,
[File TDBN-702-2.01].

Enemy Material Captured and Destroyed, June-December 1944, [File
TDBN-702-2.14].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Periodic Reports, 19 July - 28
September 1944, [File TDBN-702-3.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Periodic Reports, March 1945, [File
TDBN-702-3.1].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Letter Instruction, July-August 1945,
[File TDBN-702-3.11].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Messages, March 1945, [File TDBN-702
-3.4].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Training Schedules - Co "A", 11-13
December 1944, [File TDBN-702-3.13].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Assignments, 27 October 1944, [File
TDBN-702-3.20].

702d Tank Destroyer Battalion Firing Reports, 9-17 July 1944, [File
TDBN-702-3.23].

703d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-703-0.2 to TDBN-703-3.11 Box 23715]

703d Tank Destroyer Battalion Historical Report January-May 1945,
(6872).

703d Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Journal, messages only, (47696).

703d Tank Destroyer Battalion No information, (History).

704th Tank Destroyer Battalion

704th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, September 1944 - February 1945,
[File TDBN-704 Box 23716].

704th Tank Destroyer Battalion No useful anti-tank information, [File TDBN
-704 Box 23717].

705th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23718]

705th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, S-3 Report, Map overlay, July
-December 1944.

[Box 23719]

705th Tank Destroyer Battalion Mix of Orders, S-2 files -- not too
informative.

741st Tank Battalion

[Box 16703]

741st Tank Battalion After Action Report, December 1944, [File ARBN-741
-0.3].

741st Tank Battalion Unit Journal, December 1944, [File ARBN-741-0.7].

745th Tank Battalion

745th Tank Battalion After Action Report, June-December 1944, [File ARBN
-745-0.3 (5128) Box 16710].

745th Tank Battalion Journal, 20 July 1944 - 1 June 1945, [File ARBN-745
-0.7 Box 16711].

771st Tank Destroyer Battalion

771st Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, [File TDBN-771 Box
23723].

772nd Tank Destroyer Battalion

772nd Tank Destroyer Battalion Information December 1944 - April 1945,
[File TDBN-772].

773d Tank Destroyer Battalion

773d Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, [File TDBN-773-0.3 Box
23725].

773d Tank Destroyer Battalion Journal, [File TDBN-773-0.9 Box 23725].

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-774-0.1 to TDBN-774-0.3 Box 23739]

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 15 December 1941 - 8 May 1945, [File TDBN-774-0.1].

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Battle Report, January-March 1945, [File TDBN-774-0.3 (8751)].

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, April 1945, [File TDBN-774-0.3 (8751)].

[File TDBN-774-1.13 to TDBN-775-1.13 Box 23740]

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1943-1945 January 1945, [File TDBN-774-1.13].

774th Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Journal, September-December 1944, [File TDBN-774-3.2 (47494)].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion

File TDBN-776-0 to TDBN-776-0.6 [Box 23741]

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Informal History, July 1941 - 8 May 1945, [File TDBN-776-0].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, July-May 1945, [File TDBN-776-0.1].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, May 1945, [File TDBN-776-0.1].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, July, November 1944, [File TDBN-776-0.3].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, January - 11-31 May 1945, [File TDBN-776-0.3].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Narrative of TDBN, May 1944, [File TDBN-776-0.6].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, 26 September - 31 December 1943, [File TDBN-776-0.3].

[File TDBN-776-0.7 11-1-43 to 2-28-45 Box 23742]

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, November-December 1943, [File TDBN-776-0.7].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, December 1944, [File

TDBN-776-0.7].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January, July, November 1944, [File TDBN-776-0.7].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January 1943, [File TDBN-776-0.7].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, November-December 1943, [File TDBN-776-0.7].

[File TDBN-776-0.7 3-1-45 to TDBN-776-MD-0.1 Box 23743]

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Folders for March 1945, April 1945, 1-10 May 1945, 19-30 April 1944 No information on anti-tank actions, [File TDBN-776-0.7].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1945, [File TDBN-776-1.3].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Instructions (OIs), October -April 1945 and February-April 1945, [File TDBN-776-3.17].

776th Tank Destroyer Battalion History of Medical Detachment, December 1941 - November 1945, [File TDBN-776-0.1].

801st Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23745 through 23749]

801st Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, December 1944, [File TDBN-801-0.3 Box 23745].

After Action Reports, Journals full of map overlays, Brief log of events.

[Boxes 23750 through 23752]

801st Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Journals and Overlays.

802d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23753 through 23756]

No useful anti-tank information.

803d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23763 through 23764]

803d Tank Destroyer Battalion S-3 Journals with map overlays.

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-805-0.1 to TDBN-805-0.7 10-31-43 Box 23768]

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 3 February 1941 - 2 November 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.1].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, 1-30 September 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.2].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Monthly History, June 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.2].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, January-August, October-December 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.3].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, January-June 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.3].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, March 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, April 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, 5-6, 18, 29 May 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, October 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

[File TDBN-805-0.7 11-1-43 to 12-31-43 Box 23769]

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion History and Casualty Reports, 17 January - 31 December 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.3].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, November 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, December 1943, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

[File TDBN-805-0.7 1-1-44 to 2-29-44 Box 23770]

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, February 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

[File TDBN-805-0.7 3-1-44 to 4-30-44 Box 23771]

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, March 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, April 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, August 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23773].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, October 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23775].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, November 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23776].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, December 1944, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23777].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23778].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, February 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23779].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, March 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.7 Box 23780].

[File TDBN-805-0.7 4-1-45 to TDBN-805-1.13 Box 23781]

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, April 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, May 1945, [File TDBN-805-0.7].

805th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1942-1945, [File TDBN-805-1.13].

807th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23783 through 23796]

807th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journals and map overlays.

808th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23798 through 23801]

808th Tank Destroyer Battalion - Unit at Utah Beach, September 1944.

809th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23802]

809th Tank Destroyer Battalion History and Journals. No anti-tank information.

[Box 23803]

809th Tank Destroyer Battalion -- No anti-tank information.

811th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23804]

811th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Records, Journals, December 1944.

[Box 23805 through 23808]

811th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journals and After Action Reports.

813th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23809]

813th Tank Destroyer Battalion After Action Report, June-November 1944.

[Boxes 23810 through 23812]

813th Tank Destroyer Battalion Messages.

[Boxes 23814 through 23817]

813th Tank Destroyer Battalion Good map overlays.

[Box 23818]

813th Tank Destroyer Battalion Fire Missions for Company C.

814th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23819 through 23846]

814th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History, October-December 1944.

[Boxes 23820 through 23846]

814th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journals of messages and overlays.

817th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23823]

817th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History, July 1944-January 1945.

[Boxes 23824 through 23827]

817th Tank Destroyer Battalion Journals, weak on combat actions.

818th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23828]

818th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History, July 1944.

[Boxes 23829 through 23839]

818th Tank Destroyer Battalion Handwritten Journals and map overlays
- little anti-tank action.

820th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23841]

820th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit History and After Action Report,
December 1944.

[Boxes 23842 through 23844]

820th Tank Destroyer Battalion Year 1945 -- not too eventful.

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23847]

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, August 1944, [File TDBN
-823].

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion Year 1944, [File TDBN-823].

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion G-2 Journal and File, August 1944,
[File TDBN-823].

[Box 23849]

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion Headquarters 30th Infantry Division,
G-2 Periodic Report, July 1944, [File 823-0.8].

[Box 23850]

823d Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Report, G-2 Periodic Report,
Messages, August 1-8 1944, [File TDBN-823].

824th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23861 through 23869]

824th Tank Destroyer Battalion - Good, useful information of action against German armor.

825th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23870]

825th Tank Destroyer Battalion History -- very skimpy.

827th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23871]

827th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, January 1945 -- good tank action.

893d Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Box 23873]

893d Tank Destroyer Battalion History, After Action Report July -December 1944, Handwritten S-3 Journals.

894th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[Boxes 23874 through 23878]

894th Tank Destroyer Battalion History -- In Italy, at Anzio; supported British area.

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion

[File TDBN-899-0 to TDBN-899-0.2 Box 23879]

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion July 1940 - 20 June 1945, [File TDBN-899-0].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion History Draft, 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.1].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion History, June 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.1].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Monthly history, February 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.2].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Monthly history, March 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.2].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Monthly history, April 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.2].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Monthly history, June 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.2].

[File TDBN-899-0.3 Box 23880]

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, 15 March - 11 April 1943, [File TDBN-899-0.3].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, January - 3 May 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.3].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, 8 May - October 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.3].

[File TDBN-899-0.7 6-1-44 to 12-31-44 Box 23881]

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Operation Report, January-December 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.3].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, June 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, July 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, August 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, December 1944, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

[File TDBN-899-0.7 1-1-45 to TDBN-899-1.13 Box 23882]

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, January 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, February 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, March 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, April 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion Unit Journal, December 1945, [File TDBN-899-0.7].

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion General Orders, 1940-1945, [File TDBN

-899-1.13].

****Records of the Tank Destroyer Center (Record Group 338) Boxes 1 - 69 also researched at Suitland, Maryland.**

3. TDBN Records at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (USAMHI)

5th Tank Destroyer Group History, 1 September 1942 to 9 May 1945.

McGrann, Roy T., Captain. The 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 11-25 September 1944, Dieulouard Bridgehead.

C. ETO COMBAT INTERVIEWS RESEARCHED AT SUITLAND, MARYLAND

1st Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 16-31 December 1944, "German Breakthrough," [File 7 Box 24012].

1st Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "Summary of Bütgenbach Action," [File 7 Box 24012].

2nd Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "Battle of the Bulge," 17-20 December 1944, [File 20 Box 24017].

2nd Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough," 14 December 1944 - 16 January 1945, [File 20 Box 24017].

2nd Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Breakthrough," 14 December 1944 - 16 January 1945, [File 21 Box 24017].

Combat Interviews, "Citation for the 3rd Infantry Division for Croix de Guerre," [File 27 Box 24020].

Combat Interviews, History "30th Infantry in Operation GRANDSLAM," 30th Infantry/3rd Infantry Division by Lt. William Sutton, [File 27 Box 24020].

Combat Interviews, Maps, History "La Maison Rouge: The Story of an Engagement 23-24 January 1945," [File 27 Box 24020].

4th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 25 July - 8 August 1944, "St. Lo - Mortain," [File 31 Box 24021].

5th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 8-24 September 1944, "Moselle River Crossing," "Monaville," [File 38 Box 24023].

"Fort Driant," 3-11 October 1944, [File 39 Box 24023].

"Assault on Metz," 9-24 November 1944, [File 40 Box 24023].

"5th Infantry Division at Ardennes," 22-31 December 1944, [File 41 Box 24023].

"Crossing the Meuse by the 9th Infantry Division," [File 55 Box 24027].

"Siegfried Line and Hurtgen Forest, 9th Infantry Division Efforts," [File 56 Box 24027].

"Hamich Ridge, 16-29 November 1944, 9th Infantry Division," [File 57 Box 24027].

"9th Infantry Division's Advance to the Roer River," 26 November - 14 December 1944, [File 58 Box 24027].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 1-9 November 1944, "Hurtgen Forest Campaign," [File 74 Box 24032].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 2-16 November 1944, "Hurtgen Forest Campaign," [File 75 Box 24032].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 2-8 November 1944, "Hurtgen Forest Campaign," [File 76 Box 24032].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, 2-16 November 1944, "Hurtgen Forest Campaign," [File 77 Box 24032].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Winter Offensive, 16-24 December 1944," Co K, 110th Infantry Regiment, [File 78 Box 24033].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Winter Offensive, 16-24 December 1944," Interview with 1st Lt. Leo A. Kodzerski and 1st Sgt. Joseph W. McKenna, [File 78 Box 24033].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Winter Offensive, 16-24 December 1944," Unit Journal, [File 78 Box 24033].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Winter Offensive, 16-24 December 1944," 3/112th Infantry Regiment, [File 78 Box 24033].

28th Infantry Division Combat Interviews, "German Winter Offensive, 16-24 December 1944," 112th Infantry Regiment, [File 78 Box 24033].

29th Infantry Division, "Defense of Brest, 25 August - 15 September 1944," [File 88 Box 24036].

29th Infantry Division, "29 Let's Go," 4 October 1944, [File 89 Box 24036].

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several unlabeled folders: Magazine clippings on Vietnam.

Second Box

first folder: Handwritten drafts of memoirs; Chapter XI discusses some aspects of munitions against tanks. This is like a diary, but appears to contain some details of observations and tests.

second folder: Thank you letters, etc.

third folder: Draft of long manuscript in post WWII visit to Europe.

fourth folder: Typed part of the draft memoirs.

fifth folder: Draft of "Two Buttons: Ordnance, the story of Military History" and 1945 diary on Mid-East visit. [SEE ENTRY on EIGHTH BOX]

Third Box

first folder: Draft of European visit - WWII.

second folder: Draft of Mid-East visit - WWII.

third folder: * Report on "Trials against Front Armor of German Mark III Tanks" dated 24 May, 1942, GHQ MEF [Headquarters, Middle East Force].

Fourth Box

first folder: News clippings.

second folder: Ordnance museum pamphlets.

third folder: Press clippings.

fourth folder: Letters of commendation.

Fifth Box

- first folder: Personal letters.
- second folder: Clippings.
- third folder: * Draft article on the Afrika Korps related to Jarrett by Hans Klinger -- a participant.
- fourth folder: * Diagrams and notes on German munitions.
- fifth folder: Japanese weapons.
- sixth folder: British book on German weapons.

Sixth Box: Clippings on US Civil War.

Seventh Box: * Draft study on self-propelled "assault" guns.

Eighth Box

- first folder: Typed draft of "Ordnance, the Theme Song of Military History."
- second folder: Magazine & newspaper clippings on weapons.
- third folder: Personal papers.
- fourth folder: Description of German Panzerfaust, Hotchkiss gun, and 37mm.

Ninth Box (long, flat) Certificates.

Tenth Box (long, flat)

- first folder: Draft of "I Am an Unknown British Soldier [in North Africa]."
- second folder: Draft story on German Col Zoring.
- third folder: * Draft story on 37mm gun.
- fourth folder: * Draft article on German tanks.

Eleventh Box (long, flat) Letters and clippings (very disorganized).

Twelfth Box (long, flat) Letters and clippings (very disorganized).

Thirteenth Box **Short drafts descriptions on guns and various weapons -- probably to go with museum displays.**

Fourteenth Box **Notes and clippings (very disorganized).**

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APPENDIX D

**PERFORMANCE OF U.S. ANTITANK WEAPONS
AGAINST GERMAN TANKS**

PERFORMANCE OF U.S. ANTITANK WEAPONS AGAINST GERMAN TANKS¹

ORGANIZATION

The collapse of the French Army after only six weeks in 1940 was a rude shock to American planners, and, although misinformation abounded, tanks appeared to be the main ingredient to the surprising German success. Stopping massed German tanks became a vital tactical requirement. Believing that the Germans had massed hundreds of tanks on very narrow sectors, American planners concluded that it was impractical to equip infantry divisions with enough antitank guns to stop such attacks. As an alternative, the American Army developed the concept of independent antitank (later named tank destroyer) battalions which could be massed when needed to stop tank breakthroughs. From its base at Fort Hood, the Tank Destroyer Command directed the creation of tank destroyer battalions in the approximate ratio of one per each infantry and armored division. In practice, particularly in Northwest Europe, attachment of battalions to the same divisions became habitual, and they were virtually organic units.

Creation of the tank destroyer units did not mean that the infantry divisions were deprived of organic antitank weapons. Each regiment had an antitank company with 27 guns and, in addition, had the capability to lay mines. Further, after its hasty introduction in 1942, the rocket launcher, popularly known as the "Bazooka," was present in infantry companies and frequently used in close combat against tanks. Infantrymen also had antitank rifle grenades, but these were cumbersome to use and less popular than the Bazooka.

EQUIPMENT

During 1940 - 41 as the Army faced the prospect of war in Europe, planners realized that there were serious equipment deficiencies for fighting German Panzer Divisions. Depression and isolationism during the interwar years had left the Army starved for funds, both for R&D and for production.

In order to equip an Army of 220 divisions planned in 1941 adaptations and expedients were the order of the day. To provide an infantry antitank gun, the Army simply adapted the German Rheinmetal 37mm towed gun which the Germans had licensed for production abroad. At the time the Army adopted the 37mm, it was adequate for its task -- the principal German tank, the Mark III, only had 30mm of frontal armor in its 1940 version. Indeed, an argument against developing the towed 3-inch antitank gun, begun in 1940, was that it was difficult to see a need for such a powerful weapon. When the Army entered combat in 1942 in North Africa, the 37mm was the standard antitank weapon in the infantry divisions along with the Bazooka which was so new that the troops were introduced to it aboard the ships sailing to invade.

Equipping the tank destroyer units was more difficult. Early in the development of their tactical doctrine, the tank destroyer officers decided that they needed self-propelled weapons. However there would be a continuing debate over towed versus self-propelled guns. Towed proponents argued that self-propelled guns were too expensive, and, because they were larger, more difficult to conceal. As an expedient self-propelled gun which it hoped to replace before entering combat, the Tank Destroyer Center mounted the 75mm artillery piece, available in large quantities because it was the standard field artillery gun prior to the introduction of the 105, in the M3 half-track. Like the 37mm, the 75mm was adequate when adopted -- it could dependably penetrate 2-3 inches of armor. When the Tank Destroyer Center studied the newly developed and more powerful 76mm gun in 1942, interest in that weapon was primarily due to its flatter trajectory, i.e., its ability to hit vice penetrate (the 76mm was a lighter, more compact version of the 3-inch gun, designed to have the same ballistic performance). In addition, the Tank Destroyer Command grudgingly accepted the M10 tank destroyer as an interim weapon although they regarded it as too heavy and slow. An adaption of the Sherman tank, the M10 carried the 3-inch gun. Meanwhile, the Tank Destroyer Center rushed the development of the "ideal" tank destroyer, the M18, which would carry the 76mm gun and had the mobility deemed essential to tank destroyer tactics. Development of an antitank version of the new 90mm antiaircraft gun began in 1942, but impetus for this work was largely due to German success with their 88mm rather than any perception that existing

American weapons lacked sufficient capability to penetrate armor.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE

It is useful to recall that American troops did not engage Germans in combat until November 1942, over two years after the war began and nearly eighteen months after the Germans invaded Russia. Encounters with Russia's well armed and armored T34 and KVI tanks had given the Germans strong impetus to increase both the armament and armor of their own tanks. Meanwhile, the American Army could only capitalize vicariously on the combat experience of the British in North Africa.

Its own experience in North Africa provided mixed lessons to the American Army. It suffered some sharp tactical reverses, such as Kassarine Pass, but these were generally attributed to lack of experience and poor tactics rather than equipment shortfalls. Inadequate armor was a recognized deficiency of the M3 tank destroyer, as the loss of 21 of 31 vehicles at El Guettar demonstrated. But during that battle, the 75mm guns of the 601st tank destroyer battalion destroyed some 30 German tanks, including two of the newly introduced and heavily armored Tigers. Arrival of M10s in February gave tank destroyer battalions a more effective weapon which, despite misgivings at Fort Hood, was popular with the troops. In North Africa, both the 75mm and 3-inch guns were able to penetrate the frontal armor of German Mark III and IV tanks. The few Tiger tanks in Tunisia had little impact on either American or British thinking; the British reported killing these behemoths with their standard antitank gun, the 6-pounder. However, British and German success with towed antitank guns and American criticism of the tank destroyer concept led the American Army to adopt the towed 3-inch gun for half of the tank destroyer battalions to be deployed to Europe.

Performance of infantry antitank weapons was less salubrious. For its part, the Bazooka proved to be a very effective, close-range antitank weapon, and the Germans paid it the ultimate compliment of copying it. But the 37mm gun was a failure; reportedly its rounds bounced off the front of German tanks like marbles. A senior Ordnance officer visiting the theater in 1942 dis-

covered that about half of the ammunition available was older semi-armor piercing shot and the troops could not tell the difference between the old ammunition and new, higher velocity capped ammunition. He directed tests in theater which demonstrated the ability of the newer ammunition to penetrate the frontal armor of both Mark IIIs and IVs. But as one observer put it, "Confidence in the 37mm gun as an antitank gun has been lost."² To replace the 37mm, the Army adapted the British 6-pounder, standardized as the 57mm antitank gun, even though it was three times as heavy.

Later experience in the Mediterranean theater did not cause the Army to re-examine the performance of its antitank weapons. Available antitank weapons, artillery, and naval gunfire repulsed the German armor attacks at Gela, Sicily and Salerno, Italy. American intelligence was aware of the introduction of new, heavy German tanks such as the Panther and Ferdinand, but studies in the U.S. indicated the 3-inch gun could penetrate the frontal armor of these vehicles at ranges of 1000 yards. After one of the first encounters with a Panther in Italy in the spring of 1944, a senior officer derided the tank by pointing out that the superior mobility of an American light tank enabled it to kill the German vehicle with a 37mm gun from the rear. But the campaign in Italy, largely an infantry affair because of the mountainous terrain, did not result in antitank equipment being a major concern to senior leadership.

During the bitter fighting in the bocage (hedgerows) after the Normandy landings, it became clear that American antitank weapons were not living up to expectations when facing Panthers and Tigers. To determine exactly how serious the problem was, the First U.S. Army conducted firing tests in July 1944. In conducting the test, First Army used every weapon in its inventory with an AP capability against two captured Panthers (no Tigers were available). The results of the test were appalling. None of the American antitank weapons could penetrate the front of the Panther's hull. Only the 3-inch gun stood a chance against the Panther's turret mantle, but at less than 200 yards. However, all the weapons fired could penetrate the sides and rear. Just two weapons, the 105 howitzer (using HEAT) and the 90mm antiaircraft gun could pierce the front of the hull. Had a Tiger been available, the results

of the frontal tests would have been similar, but its thicker side armor would have defeated most of the smaller weapons. The heavier Tiger II, or "Royal Tiger" had even thicker armor, and its front was impervious to all U.S. antitank weapons until hyper-velocity (HVAP) ammunition became available for the 90mm in 1945. Shocked by the results of the July test, General Eisenhower commented angrily:

Why is it that I am always the last to hear about this stuff: Ordnance told me this 76 would take care of anything the German had. Now I find out you can't knock out a damn thing with it.³

He immediately sent his senior armor specialist to the U.S. to find a solution. The T26 tank with a 90mm gun was being developed as rapidly as possible but would not be available until 1945. Already in production, a 90mm version of the M10, the M36, was the only available solution, but even with expedited shipment these did not begin reaching the troops until September 1944.

The ineffectiveness of American antitank weapons against heavy German tanks posed a severe tactical disadvantage during the campaign in Northwest Europe. In tank versus tank actions, the ability of the German's high-velocity tank guns to penetrate U.S. tanks at ranges up to 2000 yards exacerbated the problem. Numbers and the better mobility of American tanks helped by enabling them to maneuver for flank shots. In close terrain, superior American power traverse partially compensated for gunpower. An example of the tactical disadvantage is the experience of the 2nd Armored Division near Puffendorf, Germany in November 1944. Muddy terrain robbed the Shermans of their mobility advantage while the broad tracks of the German tanks permitted them to move easily. Further, the open terrain provided optimum conditions for German tank guns, and just twenty-five German tanks, Panthers and Tiger IIs, stopped the division's attack.

As the campaign wore on, towed guns became less and less popular. They were far less effective than self-propelled guns for supporting attacking infantry and difficult to maneuver for flank shots. By winter 1944, M10s,

made excess by arriving M36s, were replacing the guns in towed tank destroyer battalions. Fighting in the Battle of the Bulge completed discrediting towed guns, where the battalions still using them suffered heavier losses with less effect than self-propelled units. During this battle, many infantrymen lost faith in the towed 57mm gun and afterwards argued for it to be abandoned. However, the ubiquitous Bazooka, despite its inability to penetrate frontal armor, proved effective time and time again in the hands of brave soldiers willing to maneuver for shots at the sides and rear of heavy German tanks.

In summary, the inadequacy of their antitank weapons caused problems for American troops in Europe and cost lives. But these inadequacies did not prove operationally decisive because the troops overcame them with numbers, tactical skill, and courage. With the action at Puffendorf as an exception, superior German equipment rarely led to significant tactical reverses. However, after the heavy fighting against tanks during the Battle of the Bulge, American complaints about their problems in defeating heavy German tanks became public. But demands for a Congressional investigation were lost in the euphoria of V-E Day.

STATISTICS COMPILED ON ANTITANK EFFECTIVENESS

The following table provides data which is useful in comparing the relative penetration performance of selected tank and antitank guns. However, it does not provide an accurate prediction of the performance of these weapons against German tanks. For example, the table shows that the 90mm gun (M82 APC BC) could penetrate 113mm at 500 yards. Thus, the gun should not have been able to penetrate the front slope of a Panther which had 80mm of armor angled at 55 degrees. The horizontal thickness (thickness = $80\text{mm} + \cos 55 \text{ degrees}$) of the Panther's front slope was 139mm. However, during the First Army and later tests the 90mm gun demonstrated its ability to penetrate the Panther's front slope.

**PERFORATION PERFORMANCE OF BRITISH and AMERICAN TANKS AND A/T WPNS AGAINST HOMOGENEOUS ARMOR
AT 30° ANGLE OF ATTACK***

BRITISH

		2 PDR				6 PDR					
RANGE (YARDS)	Weapon:	AP	APC BC	AP Wt	AP	APC	APC	APC BC	APC BC	COM PC	SABOT
	Weight:	2 lbs	2 lbs	6 lbs	6 lbs	6 lbs	6 lbs	7 lbs	7 lbs	RIGID	3.18 lbs
	MV(f/s):	6 oz	11½ oz	4½ oz	4½ oz	5½ oz	5½ oz	2 oz	2 oz	4.2 lbs	
		2800	2600	2800	2925	2775	2900	2600	2725	3550	4000
0		(72)	66	(100)	(104)	94	100	89	95	124	151
500		57	58	(84)	(88)	77	82	82	87	107	134
1000		45	50	70	73	64	66	75	80	91	118
1500		33	44	57	60	49	53	68	73	77	103
2000		25	38	45	48	38	43	62	67	64	90

BRITISH

		77 MM		17 PDR				25 PDR			37" A/A	
RANGE (YARDS)	Weapon:	APC BC	SABOT	AP	APC	APC BC	SABOT	AP	AP	AP	SAP	AP
	Weight:	17 lbs	8.15 lbs	17 lbs	17 lbs	17 lbs	8.15 lbs	20 lbs	20 lbs	20 lbs	28 lbs	28 lbs
	MV(f/s):	2575	3675	2900	2900	2900	3680	1550	1850	2000	2600	2600
0		128	182	132	132	152	201	72	87	95	124	139
500		118	165	120	120	140	186	62	74	81	116	126
1000		110	149	109	109	130	172	55	64	68	97	114
1500		100	134	98	98	120	158	49	54	58	85	102
2000		93	120	87	87	112	145	44	48	50	75	91

AMERICAN

		37MM	75MM	76MM	76MM	90MM	90MM	90MM	90MM	90MM	105MM	105MM
RANGE (YARDS)	Weapon:	APC BC	APC BC	APC BC	HVAP	APC BC	APC	HVAP	APC	HVAP	APC	HEAT
	Weight (lbs):	M51	M61	M62	T4	M82	M82	T30 E16	M82	T30 E16	40	M67
	MV(f/s):	2900	2050	26500	3400	2600	2800	3350	3200		2900	1250
0		65	76	108	176	123	132.5	235	159	271	181	130-141
500		57	68	98	150	113	124	212	151	250	174	130-141
1000		50	60	90	132	104	119	188	143	223	158	130-141
1500		43	52	81	112	95	114	164	136	197	158	130-141
2000		36	47	74	97	87	99	143	130	177	151	130-141

This table is extracted from Inclosure No. 1, Military Attache Report NO. 2473-44. The bracketing in table of perforation figures means these that should be capable of performance indicated, but, owing to over-stressing, that perforation may be associated with shatter. The figures are against homogeneous plate and allow direct comparison between allied weapons and those of the enemy. The firing tests were performed in England and are based on 50 percent success.

The following document is a report on firing tests, conducted in July 1944, to determine the effectiveness of tank and anti-tank weapons against the German Mk V "Panther" and Mk VI "Tiger" Tanks.⁶

Report of Proceedings of Board of Officers

Organization: Headquarters, First U. S. Army.

Place: APO 230, U. S. Army.

Proceedings of a board of officers which convened at Headquarters, First U. S. Army, pursuant to Special Order No. 196, Headquarters, First U. S. Army, 19 July 1944.

The board met pursuant to the foregoing order at Headquarters, First U. S. Army, APO 230, at 1400 on 12 July 1944 and on subsequent dates to conduct the firing tests. The final meeting was held on 30 July 1944.

Present: All members. **PURPOSE:** To conduct tests to determine the effectiveness of tank and antitank weapons in First U. S. Army, against the German Mk V "Panther" and Mk VI "Tiger" Tanks.

Weapon	Ammunition
Launcher, Rocket, AT, 2.36-inch.....	Rocket, AT, 2.36-inch, M6A1
Launcher, Grenade, M8.....	Grenade, AT, M9A1
37-mm Gun, M6, Mounted on Light Tank, M5A1.....	APC, M51
40-mm Gun, M1, (AA).....	AP, M58
57-mm Gun, M1.....	APC, M86
	Sabot
75-mm Gun, M3, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4.....	APC, M61
	Heat, M66 (Special)
3-inch Gun, M5, Mounted on Motor Carriage, M10.....	APC, M62, w/BDF, M66A1
	AP, M79
90-mm Gun, M1A1, (AA).....	AP, M77
105-mm Howitzer, M4, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4.....	HEAT, M67

c. The board assumed that the effect of hollow charge ammunition is not dependent on terminal velocity but the effect does vary with the angle at which the projectile strikes. Hits approaching a 90° angle of impact give better penetration.

2. **FINDINGS:** The board having carefully considered the evidence before it finds that:

(1) *Launcher, Rocket, AT, 2.36-inch.* Rocket, AT, 2.36-inch, M6A1 will penetrate the side of the turret and the side and rear armor plate of the "Panther" Tank at 100

1. a. Firing was conducted on terrain permitting 1,500 yards maximum range with a zero angle of site. All guns and types of ammunition, suitable for antitank purposes, available to First U. S. Army were defeated on targets whose armor plate was slightly burned. Upon determination of critical ranges, all penetrations were proven against the armor plate of a German Mk V "Panther" Tank with armor undamaged and in excellent condition. All firing was conducted normal to the target. No firing was conducted against the German Mk VI "Tiger" Tank as there were none available.

b. The following normal types of tank and antitank weapons and ammunition were tested:

yards. On the basis of the assumption in paragraph 1c, it follows that as the range increases, thereby reducing the angle of impact against the side of the turret and side armor plate, the possibility of penetration will materially decrease.

(2) *Launcher, Grenade, M8.* Grenade, AT, M9A1, will penetrate the side of the turret and the side and rear armor plate of the "Panther" Tank at 60 yards. On the basis of the assumption in paragraph 1c, it follows that as the range increases, thereby reducing the

angle of impact against the side of the turret and side armor plate, the possibility of penetration will materially decrease.

(3) *37-mm Gun, M6, Mounted on Light Tank, M5A1*. APC, M51 will penetrate the sides and rear of the "Panther" Tank at 600 yards.

(4) *40-mm Gun, M1, (AA)*. AP, M58 will penetrate the sides and rear of the "Panther" Tank at 600 yards.

(5) *57-mm Gun, M1*. (a) APC, M86 will penetrate the sides and rear of the "Panther" Tank at 1,500 yards.

(b) Sabot fails to penetrate front glacis slope plate and gun shield at 200 yards. Due to difficulty experienced in obtaining hits no conclusion as to the effectiveness of this ammunition was reached.

(6) *75-mm Gun, M3, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4*, (a) APC, M61 will penetrate the sides and rear of the "Panther" Tank at 1,500 yards. APC, M61 at 200 yards will not penetrate the front armor of the "Panther" Tank.

(b) HEAT, M66 (Special) will not penetrate the front glacis slope plate at 500 yards. (See assumption made in par. 1c.)

(7) *3-inch Gun M5, Mounted on Motor Carriage, M10*. (a) APC, M62 w/BDF, M66A1 will not penetrate front glacis slope plate at 200 yards. Will penetrate gun mantlet at 200 yards and penetrate sides and rear of the "Panther" Tank up to 1,500 yards.

(b) AP, M79 will not penetrate the front slope plate or the mantlet at 200 yards. It holds no advantage over APC, M62 ammunition w/BDF, M66A1.

(8) *90-mm Gun, M1A1, (AA)*. AP, M77 will penetrate front glacis slope plate up to 600 yards, the gun mantlet up to 1,000 yards, and turret up to 1,500 yards.

(9) *105-mm Howitzer, M4, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4*. HEAT, M67 will penetrate front glacis slope plate and gun mantlet at 500 yards. (See assumption made in par. 1c.)

In addition to testing the normal types of tank and antitank weapons and ammunition, additional types were tested with the following results:

(a) *75-mm Gun, M3, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4*. WP, M64—Three rounds were fired at 500 yards for the purpose of obtaining an incendiary or blinding effect. The results were unsatisfactory.

(b) *75-mm Gun, M3, Mounted on Medium Tank, M4*. HE, M48 w/fs T105—Three rounds were fired at the front glacis slope plate at 500 yards to determine its armor penetrative characteristics. The rounds failed to penetrate, ricocheting from the plate and bursting in the air.

(c) *90-mm Gun, M1A1, (AA)*. HE, M71, w/fs M48—One round was fired at 1,500 yards as a ranging shot. No perceptible effect was obtained beyond cracking the welds between the glacis and nose plate and the glacis and side plate for a distance of approximately 12 inches. The corner of the glacis slope plate appeared to have a slight depression as a result of this round.

RECOMMENDATIONS: In view of the above findings the board recommends: (1) That steps be taken by the Ordnance Department to develop armor-piercing ammunition of materially higher muzzle velocity and armor penetrative characteristics for the 3-inch, 76-mm, and 90-mm Guns, accepting, if necessary, a gun tube life as low as 200 rounds.

(2) That upon availability of 90-mm. APC, M82 ammunition in this theater, tests be conducted to determine the effectiveness of this ammunition against the "Panther" Tank.

(3) That consideration be given by the Ordnance Department to the development of a liquid-filled incendiary shell capable of igniting the target adjacent to the point of impact, for the 75-mm Gun and the 105-mm and 155-mm Howitzers.

The board adjourned at 1630 on 30 July 1944.

[s] <i>Charles E. Hart</i>	[s] <i>Peter C. Hains, 3d</i>
CHARLES E. HART	PETER C. HAINS, 3d
Colonel, FA	Colonel, Cav (Armd)
Member	President

[s] <i>Mason D. Salisbury</i>
MASON D. SALISBURY
Captain, FA (Armd)
Recorder

Endnotes

1. Appendix drawn from Baily, Charles M., Faint Praise: American Tanks and Tank Destroyers during World War II, (Hamden, CN: Shoestring Press, 1983).
2. Ibid. page 60.
3. Ibid. page 107.
4. Table and note at bottom of table extracted from a study prepared by New Developments Division, WDSS (16 Jan '45), and included in the Tank and Tank Destroyer Conference at the Army War College, 26 Jan 45. The table show the thickness in millimeters that a weapon should be able to penetrate at a given range. [SAIC File # 110]
5. Report of Proceedings of Board of Officers, First US Army. [SAIC File #206]

APPENDIX E

ACTIONS COMPLETED BY SAIC

ACTIONS COMPLETED, SORTED BY DATE AND LOCATION

	DATE	LOCATION	TYPE
1.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	57mm AT
2.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
3.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
4.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
5.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
6.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
7.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
8.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	bazooka
9.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
10.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
11.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	57mm AT
12.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
13.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
14.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
15.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
16.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
17.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT
18.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT, bazooka
19.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
20.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
21.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
22.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT
23.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
24.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
25.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
26.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
27.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
28.	December 1944	Belgium - Losheimergraben	57mm AT
29.	December 1944	Belgium - W. of NeuhoF	155mm Artillery
30.	December 1944	Belgium - SE of Honsfeld	3" towed
31.	December 1944	Belgium - Honsfeld	3" towed
32.	December 1944	Belgium - S. of Hünningen	3" towed
33.	December 1944	Belgium - Hünningen	bazooka
34.	December 1944	Belgium - Schwarzenbrüch Tr	bazooka
35.	December 1944	Belgium - Schwarzenbrüch Tr	bazooka
36.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
37.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
38.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
39.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
40.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
41.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
42.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
43.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	gasoline, grenades
44.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	AT mines
45.	December 1944	Belgium - Ruppenvenn	bazooka
46.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
47.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
48.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka

49.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
50.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka, SP TD
51.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	small arms
52.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	rifle grenades
53.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelter Wald	57mm AT
54.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	bazooka
55.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	bazooka
56.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	57mm AT

ACTIONS COMPLETED, SORTED BY TYPE

	DATE	LOCATION	TYPE
1.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	57mm AT
2.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	57mm AT
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
4.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
5.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
6.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
7.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
8.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
9.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT
10.	December 1944	Belgium - Losheimergraben	57mm AT
11.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelter Wald	57mm AT
12.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	57mm AT
1.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	bazooka
2.	December 1944	Belgium - Hünningen	bazooka
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Schwarzenbrüch Tr	bazooka
4.	December 1944	Belgium - Schwarzenbrüch Tr	bazooka
5.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
6.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
7.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
8.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	bazooka
9.	December 1944	Belgium - Ruppenvenn	bazooka
10.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
11.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
12.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
13.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka
14.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	bazooka
15.	December 1944	Belgium - Krinkelt	bazooka
1.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
2.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	57mm AT, bazooka
1.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
2.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
3.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
4.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
5.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
6.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
7.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
8.	August 1944	Mortain - St. Barthelmy	3" towed
9.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
10.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
11.	August 1944	Mortain - Abbaye Blanche	3" towed
12.	December 1944	Belgium - SE of Honsfeld	3" towed
13.	December 1944	Belgium - Honsfeld	3" towed
14.	December 1944	Belgium - S. of Hünningen	3" towed

1.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT
2.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT, bazooka
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Dom Bütgenbach	3" SP, 57mm AT
4.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	bazooka, SP TD
1.	December 1944	Belgium - W. of Neuhof	155mm Artillery
2.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
4.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	Artillery
1.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	gasoline, grenades
2.	December 1944	Belgium - Lausdell	AT mines
3.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	small arms
4.	December 1944	Belgium - Rocherath	rifle grenades

ACTIONS IN A2D2 DATA SET

	TOTAL	57mm AT	Bazooka	3" towed	Mixed	Misc
<u>COMPLETED</u>						
PHASE I	27	9	1	11	6	—
<u>COMPLETED</u>						
PHASE II	29	3	14	3	1	8
TOTAL	56	12	15	14	7	8